

Teaching Reading to ESL Adult Literacy Learners:

The Development of an Instructor's Handbook

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to develop an instructors' handbook that provides the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge associated with the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility framework for teaching reading to English as a second language adult literacy learners. The need for this handbook was determined by conducting a critical analysis of existing handbooks and concluding that no handbook completely addressed the 3 types of knowledge for the 3 instructional processes. A literature review was conducted to examine the nature, use, and effectiveness of the 3 instructional processes when teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. The literature review also examined teachers' preferences for reading research and found that texts that were relevant, practical, and accessible were favoured. Hence, these 3 elements were incorporated as part of the handbook design. Three peer reviewers completed a 35-item 5-point Likert scale evaluation form that also included 5 open-ended questions. Their feedback about the handbook's relevancy, practicality, accessibility, and face validity were incorporated into the final version of the handbook presented here. Reference to the handbook by ESL adult literacy instructors has the potential to support evidence-informed lesson planning which can support the ESL adult literacy learners in achieving their goals and contributing to their societies in multiple and meaningful ways.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

The purpose of this major research project was to develop an instructor's handbook that provides declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge (e.g., Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1983) about the use of the interactive instructional process, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility framework when teaching reading to English as a subsequent language (ESL) adult literacy learners. After examining the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks [CCLB], 2014) for recommended instructional practices, conducting a literature review on these instructional practices, and critically analyzing existing handbooks, I determined that there is a need for a handbook that provides the what, how, and why of using the interactive instructional approach (Knowles, Holten, & Swanson, 2012; Vinogradov, 2010), differentiating instruction (Tomlinson, 2014), and the gradual release of responsibility framework (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976).

In this chapter, I contextualize the project by providing background information on ESL instruction in Canada including a description of the Language Instruction to Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program and the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB). I operationally define literacy and ESL adult literacy learners and touch upon some of the unique learning needs of adult ESL literacy learners. I provide a rationale for this project by indicating that ESL adult literacy instructors require training and support when teaching ESL literacy learners and in implementing the recommendations outlined in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014), and that this support may be found in informal professional development opportunities such

as reading. After establishing the purpose for this project, I discuss its scope and limitations. I conclude this chapter with an outline of the remainder of this document.

Background of Canadian Adult ESL Literacy Programs and Documents

Canada is a multicultural and diverse society. From 2004-2013, Canada accepted an average of 253,216 permanent residents per year (i.e., individuals with permanent resident status are citizens of other countries who have immigrated to Canada with the intention of staying). In 2013, 258,953 individuals came to Canada from over 171 different countries (Government of Canada, 2014a). Many of these individuals came without English or French language proficiency. In 2013, 52.1% of individuals from the family class (i.e., spouses, partners, dependent children, parents, grandparents, adopted children, or other eligible relatives who were sponsored by a permanent resident or Canadian Citizen 18 years or older; Government of Canada, 2014d) and 46.3% of refugees did not speak English or French (Government of Canada, 2014b). In 2013, 103,494 permanent residents settled in Ontario and 37.2% did not speak English or French (Government of Canada, 2014c). In addition, while many individuals come to Canada with completed academic backgrounds, others come from circumstances that have interrupted formal education and thus have incomplete schooling experiences (Government of Canada, 2009). For example, in 2008 close to 60,000 permanent residents across Canada had fewer than 10 years of formal education in their first language (Government of Canada, 2009).

In response to the needs of immigrants and refugees, the federal government funds language programs across the country such as Language Instruction to Newcomers to Canada (LINC) in Ontario. The Canada Employment and Immigration Commission

created LINC in 1992 with the mandate to “provide basic language instruction to adult newcomers in both official languages and to facilitate the settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees into Canadian society” (Hajer, Robinson, & Witol, 2002, p. 6). The Government of Canada (2014e) documented some benefits of LINC including that it is a free program for eligible clients (i.e., being 18 years of age or older and being a permanent resident or a protected person), and some LINC sites offer childminding and transportation assistance. In addition, language classes are taught by qualified, experienced teachers, with instruction being available on-line or face-to-face. Courses are available for full-time or part-time studies during days, evenings, and/or weekends. These program structures and supports benefit many clients, some of whom may face barriers to participation such as health problems, limited living allowance, gender and cultural barriers, and limited literacy and language skills (Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC], 2004). In addition, learners are provided with settlement information including real-life task activities related to themes such as housing, banking, citizenship, and employment.

The *LINC Curriculum Guidelines* (Hajer et al., 2002) was designed based on the needs of first language literate learners, and *The Revised LINC Literacy Component 1997 of the LINC Curriculum Guidelines* (Hutt & Young, 1997) was designed for ESL adult literacy learners. ESL adult literacy learners are individuals who have had fewer than 10 years of formal education in their first language, and often this education has been interrupted due to war, illness, poverty, or family responsibilities (CCLB, 2014). These two curricula recommend communicative, task-based instruction using authentic materials and real-life contexts whenever possible. LINC programs typically are

organized by themes and topics that are selected according to the needs and interests of the learners. The LINC curricula use the Canadian Language Benchmarks (i.e., CCLB, 2014; CIC, 2012a) to define the language levels for placement and progression of learners within programs.

As there are two LINC curricula, there are two Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) documents. Each has recently been revised. First, the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: English as a Second Language for Adults* (CIC, 2012a) is the national standard in Canada used to describe, measure, and recognize language ability for first-language literate ESL adults. This standard consists of a 12-level descriptive scale covering communicative competence in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each skill is broken down into four competency areas including interacting with others, comprehending/giving instructions, getting things done, and comprehending/sharing information. These competency areas are further broken down into competency statements (what learners can do at each benchmark level), indicators of ability (observable indicators of achievement), features of communication (characteristics of the tasks/texts at each benchmark level), and sample tasks in community, work, and study settings (CIC, 2012a). The *Canadian Language Benchmarks: English as a Second Language for Adults* (CIC, 2012a) can be used for many purposes including placing learners, progressing learners, planning instruction, and developing curriculum and resources.

The *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) was revised to be used by ESL adult literacy instructors in conjunction with the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: English as a Second Language for Adults* (CIC,

2012a). In the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners*, the CCLB (2014) states that all adult ESL learners regardless of prior learning experiences are working to achieve the same language outcomes (i.e., CIC, 2012a), but that ESL adult literacy learners require additional supports and instruction designed to develop literacy skills, strategies, and concepts. The *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) is designed to address those learning needs and it contains three parts: ESL literacy approaches and supports, ESL literacy and the Canadian Language Benchmarks, and a continuum of ESL literacy skills. The first part describes the needs of learners, different learning contexts, and the importance of oral communication, learning strategies, numeracy, digital literacy, and sociocultural communication in literacy development. The second part describes what is characteristic of literacy learners at the five different literacy benchmark levels (i.e., Foundation, CLB 1L, CLB 2L, CLB 3L, CLB 4L) and illustrates tasks and literacy components for each of the four CLB competencies (i.e., interacting with others, comprehending/giving instructions, getting things done, comprehending/sharing information).

The third part lists five increments of skills, strategies, and abilities that are integral to the nine strands within the reading and writing continua. For example, for reading with comprehension, the continuum for focusing on the meaning of what is being read starts with the recognition that photographs of people convey emotions, extends to understanding that print has meaning, and extends to focusing on the meaning of what is being read (CCLB, 2014). The skills, abilities, and strategies within these continua represent the “parts” or the building blocks of instruction and are best practised within real-life, meaningful contexts in the interactive instructional approach (CCLB, 2014).

The *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) is intended to describe the needs of ESL adult literacy learners and support instructors in meeting those needs.

Needs of ESL Adult Literacy Learners

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005) defines literacy as

the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potential, and participate fully in community and wider society. (p. 21)

This definition recognizes that literacy development is more than just the acquisition of reading and writing skills. Literacy is both a cognitive skill development process and a social practice (Purcell-Gates, Jacobson, & Degener, 2004). Literacy development includes learning discrete skills such as decoding as well as acquiring values, attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and social relationships around literacy practices (Purcell-Gates et al., 2004). Purcell-Gates et al. (2004) describe how these factors could be involved in the process of paying bills, in that the observable cognitive literacy activities include reading the bill to determine the amount owing, writing a corresponding cheque, addressing an envelope, and affixing a stamp. However, these literacy activities are also shaped by attitudes (e.g., paying bills is not a pleasurable activity), beliefs (e.g., it's important to pay bills on time), values (e.g., people are "good as their word" and will pay their debts), feelings (e.g., people worry about not having enough money to pay their bills), power

relations (e.g., the company will cut off resources such as electricity if bills are not paid), and social relationship (e.g., one's family will suffer if the electricity is cut off) (Purcell-Gates et al., 2004).

Children are born into communities that may have differing perceptions of, need for, and experiences with literacy. For example, children raised in highly literate societies (e.g., Canada) by highly literate caregivers will begin their lives immersed in a literate environment. Children in this type of environment experience various literacy practices that become an integral part of their lives such as reading bedtime stories, reading maps to find directions, and reading labels (Purcell-Gates et al., 2004). In contrast, children raised in socio-cultural contexts in which there is no access to literacy will not develop the corresponding literacy practices or skills until they encounter at least one experience with written language (Purcell-Gates et al., 2004). These children are unlikely to read in the laps of their caregivers and these caregivers may be unable to offer literacy exposure to these children. Growing up with limited access and exposure to literacy skills and practices affects many things within low-literate adult lives such as being able to reach their full potential, achieve their goals, and participate in their communities and society in ways in which they would like to engage (UNESCO, 2005).

ESL adult literacy learners are individuals who are learning English as a subsequent language and who have gaps in their first language formal education. These learners typically have completed fewer than 10 years of schooling due to a variety of reasons including illness, family responsibilities, war, or poverty (CCLB, 2014). Within the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners*, the CCLB (2014) distinguishes groups of ESL adult literacy learners based on amount of first language

formal education and exposure to and experience with print literacy. The CCLB (2014) defines three groups of ESL adult literacy learners: pre-literate, non-literate, and semi-literate. Pre-literate learners speak a language with no, or a recently developed, written code such as Somali, or they may have had no to minimal exposure to print in their daily lives. Because of the limited exposure to print literacy, these individuals may not understand that print has meaning, may not hold associated values, attitudes, beliefs, about the importance of various literacy practices, and/or may not have print-based skills (e.g., decoding, metalinguistic knowledge) that can be transferred when learning a subsequent language (Arbuckle, 2004; National Institute for Literacy, 2010; Purcell-Gates et al., 2004).

Non-literate learners (CCLB, 2014) come from a literate society, but they did not attend school typically due to socioeconomic reasons. These individuals do not read or write in any language, but may be aware that print has meaning because print is an integral part of their societies. Semi-literate learners (CCLB, 2014) started but did not complete school for a variety of reasons such as war or family responsibilities. They have some basic reading and writing skills, but are not functionally literate in their first language.

UNESCO (2014) defines functional literacy as the ability to “read and write with understanding a short simple statement on their everyday life. Generally, ‘literacy’ also encompasses ‘numeracy’, the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations” (Definition section, para. 1). Individuals who are designated as ESL adult literacy learners are not functionally literate in their first language. As such, they have gaps in the cognitive skills and social practices of literacy. Therefore, ESL adult literacy learners require both

language and literacy instruction. ESL adult literacy learners require specialized approaches and materials to support their learning processes beyond what is typically offered in mainstream LINC classes (CCLB, 2014). In addition, learners with fewer than 4 years of formal education require extensive supports and instruction in ESL literacy classes (CCLB, 2014; National Institute for Literacy, 2010).

ESL adult literacy learners have unique learning needs because while they are learning English, they are also developing literacy skills. With limited first language literacy awareness, ESL adult literacy learners may have gaps in their understanding and awareness of the meaning and uses of literacy (Arbuckle, 2004; Bell, 2013; Bow Valley College [BVC], 2009; National Institute for Literacy, 2010; Purcell-Gates et al., 2004). Adult literacy learners may have limited skills to transfer into their subsequent language and literacy development such as the ability to comprehend and manipulate sounds and words (Castro-Caldas, Petersson, Reis, Stone-Elander, & Ingvar, 1998; National Institute for Literacy, 2010), efficiently scan and use left-to-right and top-to-bottom directionality patterns (Bramão et al., 2007; Brucki & Nitrini, 2008; Olivers, Huettig, Singh, & Mishra, 2014), decode (Bell, 2013; BVC, 2009; Purcell-Gates et al., 2004; Tindall & Nisbet, 2010), use metalinguistic knowledge (Gombert, 1994, as cited in National Institute for Literacy, 2010; Purcell-Gates et al., 2004), understand the concept of word boundaries (Purcell-Gates et al., 2004), use metacognitive abilities (Cromley, 2005), and/or use language learning strategies (Oxford, 2011). Some learners may also have gaps in understanding and transferring concepts about genre (e.g., bills, coupons, leases, pamphlets, labels) including format and purpose of texts (Purcell-Gates et al., 2004). Some ESL adult literacy learners also experience shame and embarrassment and/or lack

of self-confidence and self-esteem while learning, especially if they are placed in classes that are not designed to meet their literacy needs (i.e., mainstream ESL classes as opposed to ESL literacy classes; Klassen & Burnaby, 1993). Evidence suggests that ESL adult literacy learners typically progress at slower rates than mainstream adult ESL learners (Jangles Productions, 2006; Watt & Lake, 2004).

ESL adult literacy learners also have led full lives, worked, demonstrated remarkable survival skills, and have navigated complex systems such as bureaucracies, and these strengths and experiences need to be valued and tapped into during instruction (BVC, 2009; National Institute for Literacy, 2010; Vinogradov, 2008). Adult literacy learners typically learn best when content is directly related to and connected to their lives (Purcell-Gates, Degener, & Jacobson, 2001; Tindall & Nisbet, 2010; Vinogradov, 2008). Due to these various factors that make learning unique for ESL adult literacy learners, instructors require an in-depth understanding of these needs, tools for providing instruction, and training that will build their capacity for meeting the needs of these learners (CCLB, 2014).

Statement of the Problem and Rationale

The CCLB (2014) and Jangles Productions (2006) state that ESL adult literacy learners require specialized instructors who are knowledgeable in teaching ESL and literacy and that instructors require support in developing their instructional skills for teaching ESL adult literacy learners. The CCLB (2014) states that ESL adult literacy instructors should have a solid understanding of the needs of ESL adult literacy learners, an ability to accommodate the needs of the diverse group of learners that may be in a class, and the instructional tools to work effectively with ESL adult literacy learners.

Instructors who have experience teaching ESL learners with more than 10 years of prior education may take for granted the conceptual foundations, skills, and strategies that ESL adult literacy learners require (CCLB, 2014).

Prior to the revision of the ESL adult literacy benchmarks (CCLB, 2014), the most recently revised Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) document was the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: English as a Second Language for Adults* (CIC, 2012a). The release of *Canadian Language Benchmarks: English as a Second Language for Adults* coincided with a national roll-out program which involved a train-the-trainer model of implementation based on the *CLB Support Kit* (CIC, 2012b). The purpose of the *CLB Support Kit* is to provide background information for in-service training on the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: English as a Second Language for Adults*. The *CLB Support Kit* includes an orientation to the revised *Canadian Language Benchmarks: English as a Second Language for Adults*, discussions around incorporating grammar, pronunciation, and pragmatics, and discussions about the needs of unique groups of learners including multilevel classes, English for academic purposes, and learners with special needs. The *CLB Support Kit* also provides exemplars of listening, speaking, reading, and writing tasks so that instructors can identify what is characteristic of different CLB levels. This roll-out program provided instructors with in-service training to understand how the CLB was organized, and how the CLB levels were differentiated. At the time of writing this major research project, no plans for implementing a national roll-out program or developing and publishing a support kit for the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) have been publicized.

As there currently are no publicized plans for formal professional development training coinciding with the release of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014), ESL adult literacy instructors may turn to other sources for informal professional development to deepen their knowledge of how to implement the recommendations within the literacy benchmarks document. Evidence suggests that many Canadian ESL instructors seek out and read publications for their own self-directed, informal professional development (Nassaji, 2012). After identifying recommendations for some key instructional processes (i.e., the interactive instructional framework, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility framework) in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners*, the literature was reviewed and a critical analysis of existing handbooks was conducted to determine the degree to which these instructional processes were addressed (i.e., Bell, 2013; BVC, 2009; Croydon, 2005; Massaro, 2004). This analysis found that there appears to be few models that address the interactive instructional framework, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility framework in the context of teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners.

As reading for informal professional development opportunities can deepen instructors' pedagogical knowledge (Borg, 2010), this handbook has the potential to provide instructors with knowledge about the three instructional processes, and provide insight about how to incorporate differentiated instruction and the gradual release of responsibility into the interactive instructional approach during reading instruction. This handbook is intended to be a tool that instructors can use to inform their teaching practice, using the sample lesson plans as models for their reading instruction lesson

design. It is hoped that instructors will use and/or adapt the lesson plans to fit the needs of their learners.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this major research project is to develop an instructor's handbook that provides declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge (e.g., Paris et al., 1983) associated with the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility framework for teaching reading. This handbook will describe what the instructional processes are, describe how to implement them, and explain why these processes are useful for teaching ESL adult literacy learners. This handbook also will provide sample lesson plans exemplifying these instructional processes.

Scope and Limitations of the Project

This major research project is intended to provide declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge to ESL adult literacy instructors around the implementation of the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility framework. The decision to focus on these areas was influenced by my instructional experiences, and formal and informal professional development experiences. Because of these experiences, I identified three instructional processes that I was aware of and hence I may have missed other relevant instructional processes for teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. In addition, I opted to focus only on the reading component as a way to deepen my professional development in this area. As such, I developed this handbook as a function of my interests, experiences, and pedagogical knowledge as acquired through my review of the literature.

Research focusing on ESL adult literacy learners in general is currently limited but slowly expanding (National Institute for Literacy, 2010; Tarone & Bigelow, 2012). Specific to the instructional processes focused on in this project, some research has found positive results when examining the benefits of using the interactive instructional approach with ESL adult literacy learners (e.g., Trupke-Bastidas & Poulos, 2007; Vinogradov, 2010), but there is a gap in the literature centred on using differentiated instruction and the gradual release of responsibility framework when designing reading lessons and/or programs for ESL adult literacy learners. As such, the research that informs the recommendations presented in this handbook is limited to research conducted with other populations such as children, ESL learners, and adult literacy learners. While some comparisons have been drawn between these populations (e.g., Kurvers, 2015), additional research could provide insight into the benefits, challenges, and impact of implementing these instructional processes with ESL adult literacy learners. As both a consumer and producer of information in this project, I promote that instructors reflect upon their implementation of the instructional processes to evaluate what works in their instructional contexts (Peyton, Moore, & Young, 2010). This handbook is not intended to be prescriptive in nature, but rather it is one path for instructors to have access to the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge associated with the three instructional processes.

Finally, engagement with a handbook can be affected by a variety of factors including its accessibility, practicality, relevance (Borg, 2010; Nassaji, 2012; Rossiter, Abbott, & Hatami, 2013) and face validity (Nardi, 2014). Teacher reading for informal professional development is often linked to teachers being self-directed (Knowles et al.,

2012), having time to read outside of work hours, years of teaching experience, and the practicality, accessibility, and relevance of the text (Borg, 2010; Grosemans, Boon, Verclairen, Dochy, & Kyndt, 2015; Jones & Dexter, 2014; Nassaji, 2012). Evidence suggests that teachers who engage in reading for informal professional development are looking for new, interesting, and fun ways to teach (Grosemans et al., 2015). Evidence also suggests that experienced teachers engage in more informal learning through reading and experiment less than their less experienced colleagues (Grosemans et al., 2015). These factors for teacher engagement with reading for informal professional development purposes were considered in the design and revisions of this handbook.

Outline of Remainder of the Document

In this chapter, an overview of LINC and the Canadian Language Benchmark documents (CCLB, 2014; CIC, 2012a) was provided. The unique learning needs and characteristics of ESL adult literacy learners were described. I explained how the CCLB (2014) recommends that ESL adult literacy instructors be knowledgeable about language learning and literacy learning and that there has not yet been a roll-out program associated with the release of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014). I stated that this handbook has the potential to be used by instructors who are seeking informal professional development resources to increase their pedagogical knowledge in relation to implementing the ideas contained in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners*. This handbook has the potential to support instructors by increasing their pedagogical knowledge, providing new ideas for teaching, and validating their existing practices (Borg, 2010).

In chapter 2, the existing literature on the interactive instructional approach, differentiating instruction, the gradual release of responsibility framework, and instructors' engagement with reading research is reviewed. I provide a description of each process, discuss how teachers and researchers have used the approaches, and provide evidence about why these approaches may be useful for teaching reading. As there are limited models or empirical evidence centred solely around ESL adult literacy learners, I draw on literature from kindergarten to grade 6, adult literacy learners, ESL learners, and ESL adult literacy learners to examine what the processes are, how they have been implemented by teachers and researchers, and why they may be beneficial to beginning readers. In addition, I ground the design and evaluation of the handbook in existing literature on characteristics that ESL teachers prefer when reading for informal professional development.

In chapter 3, I outline the methodology used in the development, evaluation, and revision of the handbook. I provide a description of the methods and findings of the analysis of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) that was used to identify instructional processes. I describe the process for the literature review, and outline the method and findings of the analysis of existing handbooks on teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. These findings indicate the need for this handbook. I describe the evaluation and revision procedures for this handbook and describe the selection process for the handbook reviewers. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the scope and limitations of the methodology and research design.

Chapter 4 consists of a brief introduction to the handbook and the final revised version of the handbook. This version was edited based on feedback received from the three reviewers, my advisor, and the second reader for this major research project.

Chapter 5 includes a summary of this major research project, and a discussion of the evaluative feedback received from the three reviewers as well as the second reader. I describe what revisions were made to the handbook and any outstanding feedback or ideas that were not incorporated into the final draft of the handbook. This section is followed by implications for theory, and implications and recommendations for practice. This chapter also includes recommendations for future research. Chapter 5 concludes with a final word about this project.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility framework, and I describe three characteristics that affect ESL instructors' engagement in reading for professional development. In the sections on the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, and gradual release of responsibility framework (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), I address the nature of these instructional processes, how teachers and researchers have used the approaches effectively, and explain why these approaches may be useful for teaching reading to beginning readers, ESL learners, and/or ESL adult literacy learners.

Interactive Instructional Approach

According to the National Reading Panel (2000), trends in reading instruction trends have swung between holistic, meaning-centred approaches and phonetic approaches due to a variety of social, political, and practical reasons. The *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) and others (Bell, 2013; Knowles et al., 2012; Montero, Newmaster, & Ledger, 2014; Pressley, 2006; Purcell-Gates et al., 2004; Vinogradov, 2010; Vinogradov & Bigelow, 2010) call for the use of both whole language and skilled reading practices as part of a balanced literacy approach, with the interactive instructional approach and the whole-part-whole approach being reflective of such balanced approaches (Vinogradov & Bigelow, 2010). Essentially, the interactive or whole-part-whole instructional approach moves from an authentic task in its entirety, to focused instruction on the building of skills and strategies, and then returns to a whole authentic task again. Knowles et al. (2012) assert that there is a natural

whole-part-whole rhythm to learning, so designing instruction based on this approach is ideal. ESL adult literacy learners require instruction in both top-down and bottom-up reading skills to develop awareness that print has meaning and to develop understanding of the building blocks of literacy (Vinogradov, 2010).

Knowles et al. (2012) delineate the purpose of each whole-part-whole step. The purpose of the first step is to provide mental scaffolding (i.e., activating background knowledge/schemata) and motivation for learners. By starting with and building on what the learners already know using meaningful and relevant contexts, learners are prepared for new instruction and are motivated to learn. ESL adult literacy instructors can focus on learners' interests, build vocabulary through elicitation or teacher provision, and state clearly the learning objectives at the beginning of instruction (CCLB, 2014; Knowles et al., 2012; Vinogradov & Bigelow, 2010). Clear communication of learning objectives and direct connections to learners' experiences can support learners in their acquisition of knowledge, skills, and strategies: "By clarifying the purpose and rationale for instruction as it relates to the learner, then by detailing the how, what, and why of the instruction through clear objectives, the learner is fundamentally prepared for the instruction to follow" (Knowles et al., 2012, p. 250). As part of this approach, the first whole lays the groundwork for retaining new information so that recognition and recall can be utilized in the second whole.

The part aspect of the whole-part-whole learning model focuses on skilled practice of specific skills-based (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics) or meaning-based (i.e., vocabulary, fluency, comprehension) reading components. Evidence suggests that explicit skills and strategy instruction on these reading components results in increased

reading performance and strategy awareness and use (Bingham & Hall-Kenyon, 2013; Kruidenier, 2002; National Reading Panel, 2000). Explicit strategy instruction and attributing success to effort and strategy use have enhanced learners' reading performance and reading self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Chan & Lam, 2010; Chularut & DeBacker, 2004; Mason, 2004; Massengill, 2003; Nelson & Manset-Williamson, 2006; Schunk, 2003). Knowles et al. (2012) add that each part should involve active learning, consist of its own subset of whole-part-whole steps, and be mastered fully before instruction proceeds to the second whole. Some ESL adult literacy learners may feel overwhelmed when working with a whole task, so demonstrating that any task can be broken down into smaller parts can make challenging tasks more manageable: "[The interactive instructional approach] reinforces the concept that every task ... is really just a series of small steps that can be learned and applied. The same small steps can often be used to accomplish different types of tasks" (CCLB, 2014, p. 47).

The second whole is considered the major instructional component, and its purpose is to link the individual parts back together to create a new whole (Knowles et al., 2012). Some learners struggle with independently consolidating the parts or reading components into a whole again and require support. Knowles et al. (2012) argue that teachers must facilitate the second whole so that the pieces retained from prior part instruction can be strengthened and contextualized into meaningful practice. Instructors should promote active learning and repetitive practice to assist learners in transferring the parts from their working memory to their long-term memory (Knowles et al., 2012). This transfer leads to automatic use of the parts providing more cognitive space for higher-level skills of comprehension and application to real-life tasks. By using the whole-part-

whole approach, learners engage in meaningful and relevant activities and tasks that facilitate the use of literacy in learners' lives beyond the classroom (CCLB, 2014).

Vinogradov (2010) exemplifies the whole-part-whole approach for ESL adult literacy learners in the context of using the language experience approach (LEA).

Vinogradov (2010) describes how classroom instruction could begin with a shared whole class experience or activity (e.g., a field trip, making a sandwich) and include students retelling their experience with a scribe (teacher or student) recording the students' words. Then, students are guided to focus on skills-based or meaning-based tasks involving word analysis, sentence structure, or comprehension activities. Finally, students would return to the whole story again, possibly extending the story.

McConnell (2014) indicates that the whole-part-whole approach has been described in slightly different terms: activation, analysis, and application. McConnell exemplifies how a trip to the market could utilize the whole-part-whole instructional model. Instruction begins with the students going to the market and recording food names from signs. Upon returning to class, students would retell the experience of going to the market using highly repetitive sentences (e.g., I saw some potatoes. I saw some bananas. I saw some chicken). Moving into the part component, students would be guided and supported in developing phonics skills by categorizing what they saw by initial sounds (e.g., potatoes, pears, pizza). The final whole component could involve students applying the vocabulary into a practical task such as writing a shopping list that is organized alphabetically.

While balanced literacy instruction is largely recommended as an effective instructional practice for general instruction with elementary, high school, and adult

learners (Knowles et al., 2012; Montero et al., 2014; Pressley, 2006; Purcell-Gates et al., 2004) empirical research exploring the effectiveness of utilizing the whole-part-whole learning model with ESL adult literacy learners is relatively scarce although at least one group of researchers has demonstrated positive results after the implementation of this model. Trupke-Bastidas and Poulos (2007) found that using a whole-part-whole instructional model with a focus on phonemic awareness and decoding increased reading performance in 8 out of 9 part-time ESL and ESL adult literacy learners. Strongest gains were made in the areas of identifying initial letter sound, same sound, blending sounds, rhyming, and decoding clusters and short vowels by ESL adult literacy learners who demonstrated strong oral skills and a willingness to communicate (Trupke-Bastidas & Poulos, 2007). While the generalizability of this study is limited due to the small number of participants, the findings suggest that whole-part-whole instruction with a focus on decoding could benefit both ESL mainstream and ESL adult literacy learners.

In summary, several experts have recommended balanced literacy approaches as effective practice in designing literacy programs (CCLB, 2014; Knowles et al., 2012; Montero et al., 2014; Pressley, 2006; Vinogradov, 2010; Vinogradov & Bigelow, 2010). Some evidence has demonstrated that the interactive instructional approach or whole-part-whole learning model increases the reading performances of ESL adults (Trupke-Bastidas & Poulos, 2007) with gaps in their first language literacy.

Differentiated Instruction

Tomlinson (2014) defines differentiated instruction as a growth-mindset approach to teaching that recognizes, values, and supports learner differences within a class. Instructors who utilize this approach recognize that learners differ based their levels of

readiness (e.g., where they are cognitively entering the instructional cycle), interest, and learning profile (e.g., ways learners like to learn). Instructors can adjust their classroom content and/or materials, process or activities, products or assessments, and environment/feel of the class according to these factors. For example, in the context of adult ESL classrooms in Canada, instructors may conduct needs assessments to determine themes, topics, and skills that are important for their learners to inform the development of appropriate instructional outcomes and materials. Instructors may differentiate product according to learning profile by providing learners with a choice of assessment. For example, if learners are reading for information, they may present their understanding of the topic by writing a paragraph response, preparing a poster presentation, or performing a role-play. Instructors could also provide leveled readings or change the complexity of comprehension questions to differentiate content and process based on learners' readiness. Tomlinson (2014) and Sousa and Tomlinson (2011) identify several instructional strategies that support differentiated instruction such cooperative jigsaws, anchor activities, levelled tasks and rubrics, and choice boards.

There is a gap in the literature exploring the use of differentiated instruction with ESL adult literacy learners. However, looking to literature on primary to intermediate students, evidence suggests that differentiating reading instruction for ESL and ESL literacy learners is important for assisting them to “catch up” to their more advanced ESL or English-speaking peers and can improve their reading skills (Connor et al., 2011; Ford, Cabell, Konold, Invernizzi, & Gartland, 2013; Reis, McCoach, Little, Muller, & Kaniskan, 2011; Solari, Petscher, & Folsom, 2014). For instance, Ford et al. (2013) examined individual differences in literacy development among 2,300 Hispanic

kindergarten students learning English as a subsequent language. Ford et al. indicated that treating these learners as homogenous and placing them in non-differentiated learning environments place them at greater risk for developing reading difficulties later because the early development of alphabetic knowledge and phonetic spelling are closely associated with later literacy milestones. Ford et al. argued that these learners need tailored support in developing both their language proficiency *and* literacy skills. Connor et al. (2011) found that students assigned to a differentiated reading comprehension group where teachers focused on learners' individual characteristics and differentiated instruction (e.g., flexible learning groups, on-going assessments, use of centres, adapting content) outperformed students in a non-differentiated instructional group. Solari et al. (2014) found that unless provided with differentiated instruction lower-income learners, learners with learning disabilities, and ESL students with learning disabilities in grades 3-10 demonstrated lower levels of literacy performance than higher income, general education learners throughout the school year.

Reis et al. (2011) studied the impact that a differentiated, enriched reading program had on 1,192 grade 2-5 English-speaking students' reading fluency and comprehension. The experimental program provided individualized reading instruction that incorporated a variety of instructional adaptations such as grade specific reading material, individualized teacher-student conferences, provision of individualized reading strategies and/or literacy discussions, and collaborative reading activities such as buddy reading and small group enrichment (Reis et al., 2011). Reis et al. found that students in the experimental group, especially those in high-poverty schools, demonstrated significantly improved fluency and comprehension performances as compared to control

group peers. Reis et al. postulated that these results stem from new opportunities for these learners to be engaged in the material, to be provided with instruction that met their individual needs as readers, and to be exposed to scaffolding of advanced thinking skills and higher order questions as opposed to the skills-focused, test preparation, whole group instruction, and remedial focus of the control group instruction.

However, the implementation of differentiated instruction is complex. Some researchers suggest that the intersection of instructors' attitudes towards inclusion of diverse learners and multi-level classes, instructors' self-efficacy, and the availability of supports can affect the implementation of differentiated instruction (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Roy, Guay, & Valois, 2013; Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998).

Avramidis and Norwich (2002), Roy et al. (2013), and Soodak et al. (1998) found that when provided with adequate physical supports (e.g., teaching materials, resources, IT equipment), human supports (supportive principals, opportunity to collaborate, teaching assistants, specialists), and time, instructors implemented differentiated instruction to a greater degree than instructors who were not provided with the same degree of supports.

Receptivity towards diverse learners and amount of differentiated instruction provided were shown to be affected by instructors' confidence in their teaching abilities with higher self-efficacy resulting in increased provision of differentiated instruction (Soodak et al., 1998). In addition, instructors tended to utilize differentiated instructional practices that were perceived to be easy to implement. For example, some instructors adjusted the amount of work required by learners based on learners' readiness, provided extra scaffolding for weaker learners, and altered assessment criteria for different learners (Roy et al., 2013).

In the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners*, the CCLB (2014) acknowledges challenges and various supports required for instructors to adopt differentiated instruction in their classes. Some challenges include the degree of instructors' understanding of the unique learning needs of ESL adult literacy learners, and the provision of tools and training to support instructors in meeting those needs. The *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* contains several recommendations for the provision of differentiated instruction. These recommendations include differentiating the process, product, content, and environment according to readiness. Recommendations for differentiating process include using a variety of means to explain concepts and strategies while providing modelling and scaffolding of these before moving to independent practice. Recommendations for differentiating product include having learners work on the same activity but with different expectations and levels of support. Recommendations for differentiating content include providing extension activities for higher-level learners who may finish tasks more quickly. Recommendations for differentiating environment include utilizing a variety of student groupings (e.g., whole class, groups, working independently), and changing the pace of the class and type of activity to accommodate the needs of learners who are less familiar with formal classroom settings. It is implied that providing these learners with differentiated instruction may help them develop their language and literacy skills to help them cope with their daily work and home responsibilities, and achieve their educational objectives.

The Gradual Release of Responsibility Framework

In the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners*, the CCLB (2014) recommends the provision of modelling, scaffolding, and opportunities for

learners to work collaboratively before working independently. These recommendations are rooted in the gradual release of responsibility (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) and connected to Vygotsky's (1978) concept of zone of proximal development and Wood et al.'s (1976) concept of scaffolded instruction. The gradual release of responsibility represents an instructional framework in which the cognitive load for completing the task is intentionally shifted from the instructor to the learner (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Fisher and Frey (2014) have designed an instructional framework that consists of the teacher providing focused instruction (e.g., explicit instruction, modelling), guided instruction (e.g., scaffolding with high levels of instructor support), collaborative learning (e.g., learners working together with the new skills and some instructor scaffolding as necessary), and independent learning (e.g., learners complete the tasks independently). In this section, I provide an overview of Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development and a review of the literature on the steps of the gradual release of responsibility.

Zone of Proximal Development

As part of social-constructivist theory, Vygotsky (1978) distinguishes between what learners can do independently and what they can do with support or mediation. The former is referred to as the actual developmental level and often is evaluated through diagnostic or summative assessments and represents what learners can do independently. The latter relates to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD). This zone represents what is emerging in learners' cognitive development. The skills and strategies within this zone have not fully developed, but represent learning potential or what learners can achieve with support from more experienced others: “[*The ZPD*] is the

distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86, [italics in original]). In the context of adult ESL in Canada, the actual developmental level of learners who demonstrate achievement of the reading competency statements associated with Level 2 of the Canadian Language Benchmarks, for example, is Level 2. Assumedly, the competency statements of the Canadian Language Benchmark level 3 would fall into the learners’ zone of proximal development, with learners requiring support to work towards the completion of this next level.

However, even if individual learners demonstrate the same actual developmental level, their zones of proximal development may differ (Vygotsky, 1978). The capacity for learners’ development can be affected by environmental factors that include home and school experiences, and the amount of modifications provided within those environments including instructors’ abilities, time, and resources (Elliott, 2003). Aljaafrah and Lantolf (1994) explain that the zone of proximal development (ZPD) represents a holistic view of learners and the learning environment:

The ZPD is the framework, par excellence, which brings all the pieces of the learning setting together – the teacher, the learner, their social and cultural history, their goals and motives, as well as the resources available to them, including those that are dialogically constructed together. (p. 468)

In the context of ESL adult literacy learners, some factors that may affect their zones of proximal development are years of prior education and availability of first language skills

that transfer into English. For example, the National Institute for Literacy (2010) states that first language literacy acquisition can affect second language literacy acquisition:

Over many decades, scholars discussing the teaching of English and literacy to nonliterate adult [ESL learners] have acknowledged that nonliterate persons appear to acquire literacy skills in English classes much more slowly than do those with even some small degree of literacy. (p. 6)

August (2004, as cited in National Institute for Literacy, 2010) found that years of prior literacy training affects transferability skills: “Learners with higher levels of literacy could use higher-level thinking and reading techniques to read and understand English, but those with low literacy (below fourth grade) did not have the advantage of transferring those skills” (p. 5). Literacy skills and strategies are transferrable from the first to second language: “The skills and strategies involved in becoming literate in a first language are transferrable to a second language, at least to a large degree: you only learn to read once” (BVC, 2009, p. 3). ESL learners with interrupted formal education need both language and literacy skill development that is often not found in mainstream ESL classes (Woods, 2009). When designing lessons and providing support to these learners, instructors should consider how prior education and learning environments could affect learners’ rates of progression and zones of proximal development.

Wood et al. (1976) and Vygotsky (1978) indicate that instructors should model, scaffold, and expect learners to perform at levels that lie realistically within their zones of proximal development. Learners should not be expected to imitate or produce tasks that are beyond their zones of proximal development. (For an overview of models of assessing learners’ learning potential and zones or proximal development in second

language classes see Poehner, 2008.) Instruction should occur according to what learners are able to foresee as a next step, but cannot complete independently yet:

Effective instruction, thus conceived, consists in continually confronting the [learner] with problems of *controlled* complexity, setting goals or making request which lay *beyond* the [learner's] current level of attainment but not so far beyond that he is unable to 'unpack' or comprehend the suggestion or instruction being made. (Wood, Wood, & Middleton, 1978, p. 132)

The reading continuum outlined in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) can be used to approximate adult literacy learners' zones of proximal development. For example, learners working in the Emerging level for decoding text recognize that letters have both a sound and a name. With modelling and support, these learners could reasonably be expected to begin to differentiate a few familiar two-letter words (e.g., an, in, on) as this probably lies within their zone of proximal development (i.e., in the Emerging + level). However, these learners could not realistically be expected to attend to first, medial, and final letters and their corresponding sound when guessing unfamiliar words even after modelling and support (i.e., Building + level) as this expectation would typically lie well beyond their current zone of proximal development, thus being too difficult to comprehend or "unpack." Accordingly, instructors should work to identify learners' actual developmental level and zones of proximal development and design lessons that support learners accordingly. Several researchers have identified modelling and scaffolding as key instructional steps to support learners in moving forward in their skill, strategy, conceptual development (e.g., Many, 2002; Rodgers, 2005; Wood & Middleton, 1975).

While the CCLB (2014) recognizes the need for ESL adult literacy learners to achieve the same language outcomes as mainstream ESL learners, the purpose of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) is to support ESL literacy instructors in designing programs based on the needs of these learners. In the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners*, the CCLB states that ESL literacy learners do not progress in fixed or predictable ways, but rather have unique experiences and needs (e.g., years of prior education, first language transferable skills) that can affect their rates of progress and zones of proximal development. The *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* includes a continuum of nine strands for reading (e.g., processing visual information, decoding text, reading with comprehension, fluency, and expression) that describes some of the skills, knowledge, and strategies that ESL adult literacy learners may need to support their daily activities and language use. The reading continuum provides instructors with a road map for supporting learners in their literacy development:

[The reading continuum's] purpose is to support instructors in observing the many ways that ESL literacy learners internalize the concepts and develop abilities that support their learning and to provide a resource from which instructors can draw to incorporate the development of literacy skills and abilities into meaningful tasks and activities. (CCLB, 2014, p. 105)

An underlying assumption of this continuum is that learners enter it at various different points based on their readiness and unique learning histories: "The Continuum also serves as a reminder of the uniqueness of each learner; those who use it will see that no individual is at the same degree of ability for all skills, and that no two individuals

have the same pattern of skill development” (CCLB, 2014, p. 105). As Ausubel (1968) stated, understanding learners’ actual developmental level is essential in planning instructional supports to move learners forward: *“If I had to reduce all of educational psychology to just one principle, I would say this: The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach him accordingly”* (p. vi [italics in original]). The continuum in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014), can be used to ascertain learners’ actual developmental levels and plan instruction that supports learners in working within their zones of proximal development to reach the next Canadian Benchmark level.

Focused Instruction

Focused instruction is the part of the lesson during which instructors assume all or most of the responsibility for the task completion by modelling or demonstrating how to complete it (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Like the first whole in the interactive instructional approach, at this part of the lesson, instructors also clearly indicate the purpose of learning so that learners understand what to focus on and what the connections are between what they are doing and why, how, and when to do it (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Fisher and Frey (2014) indicate that this part of the lesson could take up to 15 minutes, and instructors can place it at any part of the lesson.

Modelling is an instructional technique in which an expert or skilled other demonstrates to a novice how to use a skill or strategy, often by thinking-aloud the steps and mental processes involved in a process (Grabe & Stoller, 2013; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Regan & Berkeley, 2012; Rupley, Blair, & Nichols, 2009; Wood et al., 1976).

Modelling or demonstration is an integral step in a variety of explicit strategy instruction cycles (e.g., Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, & Robbins, 1999; Cromley, 2005; Oxford, 2011; Woloshyn, Elliott, & Kacho, 2001). Within these cycles, authors recommend various procedures for modelling skills and strategies. Typically, components of modelling strategic behaviours include the instructor providing declarative (i.e., what), procedural (i.e., how), and conditional (i.e., when and why) knowledge of the skill or strategy (e.g., Paris et al., 1983). For example, instructors might state the name of the strategy such as previewing the text or predicting (declarative knowledge), model through a think-aloud how to preview or form predictions (procedural knowledge), and explain the importance or the purpose of the strategies as well as when to use them (conditional knowledge). Utilizing this kind of instruction can activate learners' attentional and retention processes allowing individuals to understand and remember what is important about using the modelled skill or strategy (Bandura, 1994). This instructional process can lead to learners being motivated to reproduce those skills or strategies especially if the modelled skill or strategy led to successful or rewarding results (Bandura, 1994). Modelling skills and strategies using these components can deepen learners' awareness and production of what strategy to use, how to use it, and when and why to use it (Bandura, 1994; Paris et al., 1983).

The degree of explicitness when modelling should be based on learners' actual developmental levels and zones of proximal development. Appropriate modelling of reading skills and strategies is extremely important as learners do not become independent readers by maturation alone (Blair, Rupley, & Nichols, 2007; Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2009). Bandura (1994) states that for individuals to produce modelled behaviour

successfully they must have first attained the required subskills: “The more extensive the subskills that people possess, the easier it is to integrate them based on modeled information to produce new behaviour patterns” (p. 90). While many instructors recognize the importance of modelling reading skills and strategies for their learners, not all instructors provide adequate modelling of skills- or meaning-based literacy components (Bingham & Hall-Kenyon, 2013). One reason for this could be that instructors do not provide sufficient time or explicit modelling based on learners’ needs (Regan & Berkeley, 2012).

There is a gap in the literature related to the modeling of reading skills and strategies with ESL adult literacy learners in Canada. However, modelling of reading skills and strategies has been found to be effective in teaching a variety of other learners. Methe and Hintz (2003) found that when a grade-three teacher modelled sustained silent reading in class by demonstrating enjoyment and providing procedural guidelines, an average of 93% of students stayed on task in their own silent sustained reading in comparison an average of 59% of students who stayed on task when the teacher did not provide this modelling and instead completed paperwork or classroom chores during this reading period. Walker (2005) found that modelling reading strategies through a think-aloud that incorporated self-statements and a self-questioning strategy (e.g., How do I begin? How do I check predictions? How does it fit together? Does my prediction make sense?) resulted in her 4th-grade students increasing their strategy use, their self-efficacy, and their comprehension.

Guided Instruction

Guided instruction is the transitional part of the lesson during which instructors

provide scaffolded instruction that assists learners in moving from instructor-supported practice to being able to do the task independently (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Wood et al. (1976) describe the process of scaffolding as the provision of temporary supports by more experienced individuals to less experienced individuals. Scaffolding consists of three characteristics: contingency, fading, and transfer of responsibility (Van de Pol, Volman, & Beishuizen, 2010). Contingency refers to how instructors adapt their teaching to meet the needs of the learners. Fading refers to the gradual withdrawal of scaffolding based on learners' responsiveness to supports and their progress. The transfer of responsibility refers to when learners take increasing control of their learning. Van de Pol et al. (2010) argue that scaffolding is based on an interactive process in which both instructors and learners participate actively in the process.

The scaffolding process (Wood et al., 1976) is a complex process. Not only do instructors need to fully understand the depth of and the parts involved in the task, they must also understand learners' actual developmental level and zones of proximal development, and then decide what errors to focus on and what level of help to provide (Wood et al., 1976). The decision-making process about what supports to provide and when to provide them is not straight forward, and some researchers (Rodgers, 2005; Wood, 2003; Wood et al., 1976; Wood & Wood, 1996) recommend that these instructional decisions occur in situ. While instructors discover the appropriate level of scaffolding needed during instruction time, some researchers (Rodgers, 2005; Wood, 2003; Wood & Wood, 1996) state that instructional time may not always be used to move learners forward. Sometimes, instructors may ask questions or vary levels of support simply to determine the levels at which learners are currently functioning. Guided

instruction is an ideal time to gather assessments for learning and may involve completing observations and taking anecdotal notes on reading performance and strategy use or by taking running records of learners' reading performance to identify decoding, fluency, and comprehension needs and strengths (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

Different studies have listed various instructional moves that are characteristic of scaffolding. Essentially, instructional moves are intentionally used verbal supports/phrases that instructions provide to move learners forward in their skill and strategies development: "[Research] studies suggest that teachers scaffold children's reading behaviours by using language effectively; they respond to a student's reading behaviours with talk that is designed to bring the student a little further along" (Rodgers, 2005, p. 505). These instructional moves can unfold in various formats. For example, Wood et al. (1976) suggest the following instructional moves: direct intervention by showing learners how to do something, verbal correction through telling, and verbal direction and reminder through telling. Maloch (2002) indicates that using direct and indirect elicitations, modelling, highlighting of strategies, and reconstructive steps indicates instructional moves. Rodgers (2005) found that tutors tended to provide more directing (e.g., making suggestions on what to look for) or questioning (e.g., asking learners check their understanding) than demonstrating or telling in her study that examined the frequency and types of scaffolding prompts or cues used by tutors working with struggling readers. Many (2002) used three categories to analyze scaffolding interactions: (1) degree of support from teachers or peers (i.e., modeling, supplying information, clarifying, and assisting), (2) support with student involvement (i.e., questioning, prompting, and focusing attention), and (3) degree of student involvement

(i.e., encouraging self-monitoring and labelling-affirming). In a review of the literature, Van de Pol et al. (2010) found six means of scaffolding: feeding back (e.g., assessment for learning), hints (e.g., providing prompts or cues), instructing (e.g., telling learners what to do and explaining how and why something must be done), explaining (e.g., providing detailed information or clarification), modelling (e.g., demonstration), and questioning (e.g., asking questions and requiring a response). Fisher and Frey (2014) recommend providing cues, prompts, and questions. While any of these instructional moves can occur in any class, they are considered part of scaffolding only when they are utilized according to learners' need, applied contingently, and are part of the fading and transfer of responsibility process (Van de Pol et al., 2010).

Fisher and Frey (2014) indicate that the guided instruction phase of the lesson is an ideal time to differentiate instruction. For example, instructors can differentiate content during small-group guided instruction by providing groups with appropriately leveled texts. Instructors can differentiate the process during guided instruction by varying prompts and cues or offering visual support to learners based on their strengths and needs. For example, instructors could provide both high and low levels of support in reading the daily agenda. For learners with limited decoding and sight word skills, an instructor may elect to include visual representations of the skills on the agenda such as an image of a book to represent reading. The provision of images allows less skilled readers to anticipate the sequence of events by using the picture cues if they are not able to decode the words yet (Ankrum, Genest, & Belcastro, 2014). For learners with more decoding and sight word skills, the instructor may only need to provide lower-levels

of scaffolding such as gesturing cues to help learners understand where to look on the agenda next (Ankrum et al., 2014).

There is a gap in the literature on scaffolding in the context of ESL adult literacy classrooms. However, there is ample evidence of scaffolding practices in reading instruction in elementary schools (e.g., see Van de Pol et al., 2010). In looking at the verbal scaffolding provided by a kindergarten teacher to encourage English-speaking students to use reading strategies independently, Ankrum et al. (2014) provide a rich description of differentiated instruction provided to students. This description illustrates how to consistently and intentionally integrate differentiated scaffolding into small group reading instruction. While the teacher participant entered into the instructional process with each reading group with a lesson plan in mind, she regularly deviated from the plan to support learners within their zones of proximal development. These reading sessions did not focus on learners reading aloud. Instead they focused on building reading strategies through authentic conversations and verbal scaffolding through various prompts and questions according to the learners' level of readiness. All the students in this class graduated from kindergarten at or above the reading level.

The provision of scaffolding also has been found to be effective with English speaking college students who have gaps in their reading skills and strategies. Zhang (2011) examined the use of scaffolding approaches to support English-speaking college students who required literacy focused bridging programs before transitioning into their programs. The findings of this study suggest that the higher the level of scaffolding provided to these learners the stronger the correlations were among various kinds of reading strategies. For example, students who were provided explicit metacognitive

strategy instruction that included defining the strategy, providing a rationale for the strategy, and teacher modelling of strategy use were more likely to use metacognitive reading strategies than students who were only provided with the definition and rationale or definition only of the reading strategies.

Research also indicates benefits of providing scaffolded instruction to elementary and secondary level ESL students. Iddings, Risko, and Rampulla (2009) found that the provision of scaffolding within a safe and supportive environment that included opportunities to collaboratively activate background knowledge, validate learners' language output through paraphrasing and modeling, and to seek and provide first language peer support increased grade-3 ESL learners' abilities to make meaningful connections to texts. Dabarera, Renandya, and Zhang (2014) conducted a mixed methods quasi-experimental study to examine if explicit teaching of metacognitive strategies affected Singaporean ESL secondary students' reading performance and strategy use. In the experimental group, the instructor modelled effective metacognitive strategy use, faded support by acting as a guide as learners began using the strategies, and then provided opportunities for students to use the strategies in groups with teacher support only when needed. Some learning activities in the control group consisted of silent reading, followed by reading aloud of the text and teacher explanation of challenging vocabulary and parts of the text. Students were asked questions about the text, and while teachers provided error correction, teachers did not model or guide students in how to find the answers in the text. Debarera et al. found that the provision of metacognitive scaffolding via explicit teaching increased ESL secondary students' metacognitive

strategy awareness and reading comprehension as opposed to learners who did not receive these supports.

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning is part of the instructional process during which learners practise the skills, language, and fluency required to become part of the knowledge community to which they want to belong. Bruffee (1993) describes the collaborative learning process as one in which classroom environments can be designed to support learners in trying out the roles or the language associated with that group: “collaborative learning provides teachers with an important tool: transition communities or support groups that students can rely on as they go through the risky process of becoming new members of the knowledge communities that they are trying to join” (p. 4). Learners need opportunities to engage in conversations about reading and texts to become part of the literate community: “Struggling [or unskilled] readers need both rich conversations about big ideas in texts, which let them participate as full members of a literate community, and interactions that support figuring out the details of the textual world” (Bomer, 1998, as cited in Harmon, 2002, p. 609). Bruffee describes the collaborative process as one that leads to learner confidence and interdependence as learners move from dependence on the instructor, to trusting peers in the community (e.g., the class), to trusting oneself as having developed the skills, language, and values of the community to which they want to belong.

Fisher and Frey (2014) argue that collaborative learning is missing from previous gradual release of responsibility models (e.g., Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Wood et al., 1976). Fisher and Frey (2014) state that learning from peers is a vital component of the

learning process. They describe collaborative learning as being an opportunity to connect thinking and learning as learners apply recently learned skills and/or strategies (e.g., through modelling or guided instruction) to new situations or to engage in a spiral review of previous knowledge. Fisher and Frey (2014) describe this process as being a little messy and experimental as learners work together to build their knowledge, begin to consolidate the parts, confirm what they already know, and reveal partial understandings and misconceptions: “If you are pretty certain your students will be able to complete a collaborative learning task accurately the first time through, that task would probably be better suited to the independent learning phase” (Fisher & Frey, 2014, p. 8). The inclusion of collaboration as part of the gradual release of responsibility model requires instructors to consider how and when learners can work collaboratively to practise and use recently acquired skills while supporting each other in the process. Instructors have the responsibility to create a classroom environment that encourages respectful interactions and values a discourse culture that involves risk-taking, explicit modelling, and practice of particular talk moves (Michaels, O’Connor, & Resnick, 2008).

Collaborative learning can occur in basic group work during which learners share their ideas (e.g., think-pair-share, class discussions, peer interviews) or in productive discussions through accountable talk (i.e., Resnick & Helquist, 1999). According to Resnick and Helquist (1999), accountable talk builds thinking skills by allowing opportunities for learners to develop and extend peers’ comments, requires accurate and relevant knowledge about the topic of discussion, and promotes reasoning skills. Instructors can model and scaffold phrases and questions that encourage learners to communicate productively during discussions.

Chapin, O'Connor, and Anderson (2009) refer to the phrases and questions that encourage learners to communicate productively during discussions as *talk moves*. While Chapin et al. describe talk moves in the context of supporting thinking and reasoning during mathematics instruction, these talk moves could be applied in the context of ESL (e.g., debating a grammar point, reaching consensus). These talk moves can support thinking and learning in whole-class, small group, and partner discussions and can be utilized by teachers and/or students. The purpose of talk moves is to elicit respectful discussion of ideas. The five talk moves described by Chapin et al. are revoicing, repeating, reasoning, adding on, and waiting. Revoicing can be used when students express thoughts or ideas that are unclear, with instructors (or other students) rephrasing what they think they heard. For example, instructors might begin the rephrasing with, "So, you're saying that ...?" (Chapin et al., 2009, p. 13). In this way, students can respond and verify if the instructors' understanding was accurate. The repeating talk move occurs when instructors ask peers to rephrase/revoice what another student said, often when the initial statement was unclear or confusing. For example, instructors might request, "Can you repeat what he just said in your own words?" (Chapin et al., 2009, p. 13). Asking students to repeat what others have stated encourages learners to follow conversations, attempt to understand critical points, and add credibility to all learners' ideas.

The reasoning talk move involves instructors asking the class to apply their own rationale to a peer's rationale. For example, instructors might ask a student, "Do you agree or disagree and why?" (Chapin et al., 2009, p. 13). The purpose of this talk move is to make explicit learners' understanding by applying their thinking to someone else's contribution (Chapin et al., 2009). Once the original unclear statement has been revoiced,

repeated, and reasoned, the instructor may elect to open the conversation for more input by using the adding-on talk move. For example, instructors might elicit comments from the wider group by asking “Would someone else like to add something more to this?” (Chapin et al., 2009, p. 13). The prompting of input by other learners may result in an increased willingness to share opinions during group discussions (Chapin et al., 2009).

The final talk move that can promote the respectful discussion of ideas is waiting. This talk move allows learners to have time to process their ideas without pressure. For example, instructors might state, “Take your time ... we’ll wait” (Chapin et al., 2009, p. 13). Wait time can be encouraged while the whole class ponders their thoughts on a problem and when specific students are called on to answer. One technique that encourages all students to formulate their responses is to allow for an extended think time that ends when most of the class raises their hand to respond. This technique ensures that instructors do not continuously call on the learners who can reason quickly. Chapin et al. (2009) state that while teachers may feel uncomfortable with long periods of silence (e.g., 45 seconds), consistently and patiently providing this thinking time can encourage students to participate in thinking through their ideas rather than giving up because they were not provided enough time. These five talk moves can be modelled in whole-group discussion, and encouraged during small group and/or partner discussions.

While collaborative learning relationships and behaviours have commonly been identified in adult-child learning relationships (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978; Wood et al., 1976), Taylor, King, Pinsent-Johnson, and Lothian (2003) found these behaviours in adult literacy classes as well. Taylor et al. (2003) describe four collaborative learning behaviors including social learning behaviours, negotiation behaviours, feedback behaviours, and

patterns of directionality. Social learning behaviours include inviting, assisting, directing, tutoring, and modelling. These behaviours were observed when a more knowledgeable peer invited others to participate or offered support during various tasks such as asking peers questions about a reading or demonstrating how to open emails. Negotiation behaviours include consensus building, directives, and compromise. These behaviours involved peers providing direct support such as telling learners what to do in the literacy task (e.g., spell the word this way) and social etiquette while completing a task (e.g., turn taking). Feedback behaviours include seeking information, correcting others and self-correcting. Finally, directionality patterns refer to who acts as the scaffold builder in the learning transaction. Often, more capable peers guide less capable peers as learners begin to develop awareness of classmates' levels of competence. Often learners are quite aware of who may require extra supports over others.

In the context of adult ESL, instructors can incorporate lessons on sociocultural competence in order to ensure culturally appropriate ways of communicating. Sociocultural competence refers to learners' pragmatic knowledge about how to communicate appropriately within various social and cultural contexts (Celce-Murcia, 2007). Variables of sociocultural knowledge include social contextual factors (e.g., age, gender, status), stylistic appropriateness (e.g., politeness strategies, registers/levels of formality), and cultural factors (e.g., background knowledge of the target language group, dialects, cross-cultural awareness; Celce-Murcia, 2007). Lenchuk and Ahmed (2013) describe teaching sociocultural speech acts (e.g., greeting, thanking, complimenting, apologizing) by using a whole-part-whole approach in which learners move from activating their background knowledge to practising discrete skills to completing

homework tasks that involve identifying and reporting on the use of the speech acts in real world contexts. By building on what learners already know and expanding classroom discussions around what is appropriate according to contextual factors (e.g., gender, register, cultural backgrounds), learners can improve their sociolinguistic knowledge. This is important as Celce-Murcia (2007) warns that making a cultural blunder can be more serious than making a linguistic error. If instructors observe blunders or challenges during group work, instructors can provide modelling and guidance to the learners. Bruffee (1993) states that occasionally instructors may need to provide the class with basic rules about communicating (e.g., explicit instruction with respect to not interrupting others). Practicing these communication skills in class can provide opportunities for learners to develop key sociocultural skills for interacting with others in various communities.

Taylor et al. (2003) found that learners' ways of making sense of their learning and their expectations of the instructor changed while attending Canadian adult literacy programs. Taylor et al. suggest that this is due to instructor teaching style and the use of collaborative practices within the class. In this study, some learners transitioned from being dependent on instructors for explicit instruction and corrections to viewing teachers as role models with whom to develop interpersonal relationships. Others moved from viewing instructors as role models to viewing teachers, the self, and peers as being sources of knowledge. Working with others in appropriate and effective ways can be encouraged and developed during various phases of the lesson including modelling, guided instruction, and collaborative learning opportunities. In the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners*, the CCLB (2014) recommends that

instructors support learners in developing their collaborative skills and strategies in a section called Working with Others. This section includes strategies that encourage learners to act as resources in supporting each other (e.g., finding a partner, using soft skills such as giving praise to a partner, using active listening, respecting personal space, and supporting the development of effective group work: see CCLB, 2014, p. 18 for the full continuum).

Independent Learning

In the gradual release of responsibility framework, the independent learning phase represents the part of the lesson during which learners take all or most of the responsibility for the task completion (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). This phase involves learners using various self-monitoring, metacognitive, and self-regulating strategies that were modelled and practised in guided instruction and collaborative learning contexts (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). In the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners*, the CCLB (2014) recommends that instructors provide modelling, guided instruction, and collaborative learning opportunities for learners to be able to use metacognitive strategies independently, and provides a continuum of learning strategies that support learners in becoming independent in managing learning and thinking critically. The skills, strategies, and concepts outlined in this continuum encourage learners to use metacognitive strategies to think about the learning process and how self-monitoring the learning process can make learning more effective. The CCLB indicates that for ESL adult literacy learners, modelling and scaffolding of these metacognitive skills are essential to increase the likelihood of learners using them independently and becoming life-long learners.

Cromley (2005) indicates that while English-speaking adult literacy learners are engaged in monitoring their thinking as part of their daily lives (e.g., deciding what bus to take), but that these metacognitive abilities do not transfer easily to reading or other academic learning in class. Unskilled adult readers tend to perceive reading as a decoding practice rather than as a meaning-making process and they often lack knowing when, why, and how to apply comprehension strategies that can impede comprehension monitoring (Cromley, 2005; Kruidenier, 2002). Research suggests that modelling and scaffolding of metacognitive strategies can lead to self-regulated use during independent reading: “Metacognitive training helps [learners] internalize the strategies they use and promotes an awareness of when and why they are effective. This awareness bolsters the ability to transfer the strategies ... to other situations in which they would be useful” (Glaubman, Glaubman, & Ofir, 1997, as cited in Williams & Atkins, 2009, p. 33). Essentially, the independent learning phase allows learners the opportunity to pull together the skills, strategies, and concepts developed in earlier lessons and apply them to new, relevant, and real-world tasks (Grant, Lapp, Fisher, Johnson, & Frey, 2012).

One example of independent learning is homework. Fisher and Frey (2014) indicate four purposes for homework: fluency building, application, spiral review, and extension. Reading fluency can be practised independently after modelling, partner reading, and feedback has been provided (McShane, 2005). When reading fluency practice is assigned for homework, instructors should provide at-level texts so that learners do not encounter additional challenges in vocabulary, decoding, or comprehension (McShane, 2005). Krashen (2005) indicates that reading at home should be focused on reading for pleasure rather than on skill-building activities per se. The

Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners (CCLB, 2014)

contains a continuum for reading fluency development that should also be consulted before assigning reading fluency homework so that homework expectations do not exceed learners' zones of proximal development.

The second purpose of homework is application (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

Application involves learners applying the knowledge, skills, and strategies that have been modelled, guided, and collaboratively practiced to an independent learning situation. For example, learners could apply their reading skills by looking for and taking photographs of community signs (e.g., stop sign, one way street sign) in their neighbourhood that were recently studied in class. Third, the spiral review as homework consists of learners reviewing past learning. Instructors direct learners to specific examples to review for homework so that links can be made between past and current learning. This can strengthen learners' ability to access background knowledge, develop binder organization skills, and increase awareness that text has meaning.

Finally, extension homework activities invite learners to extend their learning across topics and disciplines. For example, if learners are studying writing formal letters and citizenship topics such as the role of the Members of Parliament, learners may be asked to write a letter to the MP on a topic important to them (e.g., requesting LINC classes to be closer to their homes). Whatever the purpose is for homework, Fisher and Frey (2008) warn that instructors often assign homework too early in the instructional cycle (e.g., before the skills or strategies have been modelled, scaffolded, and collaboratively practiced). Assigning independent learning before students are able to complete the tasks independently may set up learners for failure. Learners need to have

experienced several successful attempts at the skill, strategy and conceptual development in modelled, guided, and collaborative learning situations before being asked to complete those tasks independently.

Instructors' Engagement With Reading Research

Instructor engagement with reading research conducted around second language acquisition is important for promoting effective instruction. Engagement in professional reading can support instructors in making deeper sense of their work, identifying ideas to experiment with in their classrooms, provide instructions for new ways of discussing their classroom programs, validate their practices, and promote new ways of thinking about planning for instruction (Borg, 2010). As the handbook developed here is intended to present evidence-based research about the what, how, why, and when of incorporating the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility framework into reading instruction for ESL adult literacy learners through a teacher-friendly discourse (Gee, 2015), I sought out literature that addressed how instructors perceive reading for professional development.

Nassaji (2012) found that while some adult ESL instructors in Canada (82%) agreed that knowledge gained from teaching experiences is more relevant to their teaching than knowledge gained from reading research on second language acquisition, most (97%) also believed that knowing about the research improves teaching practice (Nassaji, 2012). Nassaji suggests that Canadian ESL instructors who have access to published research on second language acquisition accessed these sources primarily through books (50%), the Internet (50%), journals (31%), and/or attending conferences and workshops (47%). Nassaji also suggests that adult ESL instructors typically are

unengaged with reading research studies because of time constraints (93%), article difficulty (43%), disinterest (33%), no access (28%), and/or the belief that such articles were not useful (7%). Other researchers also have found that ease of use and level of difficulty affects adult ESL instructors' willingness to read research-based articles (Bartels, 2003; Rossiter et al., 2013).

Several researchers (Borg, 2010; Nassaji, 2012; Rossiter et al., 2013) indicate that there are three characteristics that predominantly affect ESL instructors' engagement with reading for professional development. These characteristics are relevance, practicality, and accessibility. The perceived relevancy of texts affects readers' motivation to read (Rossiter et al., 2013). Typically, ESL instructors are motivated to read and prefer reading about things that are pertinent to their own classrooms, concerns, interests, and priorities (Borg, 2010; Rossiter et al., 2013). Practicality refers to the degree to which the information presented provides real-life applications that connect directly to instructors' classrooms. Practicality is enhanced when writers present ready-to-go applications that include instructions and have explicit connections and applications to classrooms (Rossiter et al., 2013). These applications are ideal when readers are provided with detailed descriptions of classroom activities that they can relate to their own work and when recommendations for practice are clear and perceived as feasible (Borg, 2010). Bartels (2003) found that instructors validated information in teaching articles based on the quality of connections that articles made to their classroom realities and the degree to which their own teaching experiences were validated.

Accessibility refers to the degree to which articles/resources are physically available to instructors and are easy to read. Teachers have indicated their preference for

reading texts written in a personal, not academic, writing style that includes summaries of key findings rather than detailed descriptions of research methodology, data analysis, and findings (Borg, 2010; Rossiter et al., 2013). Limited use of jargon and abbreviations is appreciated along with the presentation of clear definitions and examples of key terms and concepts (Rossiter et al., 2013). To increase instructors' engagement in reading research, it is important that writers do not "dumb down" the information, but rather present it in a style that is familiar to the reader including the use of familiar conventions (Borg, 2010; Gee, 2015).

Conclusion

In this chapter I outlined three instructional processes that I identified in *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) and discussed the three characteristics (i.e., relevance, practicality, accessibility) that promote ESL instructors' informal professional development. While this chapter segmented these instructional processes into different sections, they are all interconnected. By identifying learners' actual developmental levels and zones of proximal development, instructors can plan lessons according to learners' needs using the gradual release of responsibility framework. Each component of this framework requires an on-going awareness of learners' needs and achievements so that instructors can alter or differentiate content, process, product and environment. In addition, the gradual release of responsibility framework also coincides with the interactive instructional approach as modelling may represent the first whole, guided instruction may represent instruction of the parts, and collaborative and independent learning may represent the final whole as learners practise their language, skills, and fluency in authentic real-world tasks.

This literature review has informed my critical analysis of existing handbooks (i.e., Bell, 2013; BVC, 2009; Croydon, 2005; Massaro, 2004) and has provided me with a solid base of declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge around the three instructional processes that I have elected to focus on. As the literature presented in this chapter indicates that there are few models on how to incorporate these instructional processes with ESL adult literacy classes, the handbook developed here can provide instructors with valuable knowledge and direction for using these processes to teach reading to ESL adult literacy learners. By incorporating some or all of these instructional processes and their components into their instruction, ESL adult literacy instructors can provide learners with positive and enriching learning environments. These environments can build the cognitive skills and literacy related social practices that can support ESL adult literacy learners in becoming part of the literate communities to which they want to belong.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this project is to develop an instructor's handbook that provides declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge (e.g., Paris et al., 1983) about instructional processes for teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners presented in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014). In this chapter the methodology used in the development, evaluation, and revision of the handbook is outlined. This chapter begins with an analysis of recommended instructional processes outlined in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners*. Following is an analysis of relevant literature and existing handbooks and other resources related to the teaching of reading to ESL adult literacy learners. Next, the rationale for this handbook is outlined, and a description of the evaluation and revision procedures for it, including the development of the evaluation form, is provided. The recruitment process and selection criteria for the handbook reviewers also are described. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the scope and limitations of the methodology, research design and handbook.

Developing the Handbook

The purpose of this major research project is to develop a handbook that has the potential to be used by instructors for informal professional development related to teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. Professional development has been defined as “the developmental process of acquiring, expanding, refining, and sustaining knowledge, proficiency, skill, and qualifications for competent professional functioning that results in professionalism” (Elman, Illfelder-Kaye, & Robiner, 2005, p. 368). Guskey (2003) found that the most frequently mentioned characteristic of effective professional

development programs was the enhancement of teachers' content and pedagogic knowledge. Content knowledge represents instructors' knowledge about the subject they are teaching including the key concepts and central facts of the discipline. For example, in the context of teaching reading, content knowledge may include an understanding of reading skills (e.g., the alphabetic principle, fluency, comprehension) and strategies (e.g., previewing the text, rereading, questioning). Pedagogic knowledge represents the knowledge about how students learn, about instructional approaches, and about theories of learning. For example, in the context of the handbook here, pedagogical knowledge may represent how to teach reading to the unique group of learners using various instructional processes.

Of particular interest to me as an instructor and a researcher is the declarative (i.e., what is it), procedural (i.e., how to do it), and conditional (i.e., when and why to use it) knowledge (e.g., Paris et al., 1983) about instructional approaches. In my own pursuits of formal (e.g., TESL accreditation training) and informal professional development (e.g., professional reading, attending conferences), I find that the answers to the what, how, why, and when questions result in the transfer of the new knowledge into my teaching practice. As such, questions that guided the early steps of this project were as follows:

What instructional approaches are recommended in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) for teaching ESL adult literacy learners? How does the CCLB recommend we implement these approaches? Why are these approaches recommended? To answer these questions, I reviewed the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* to identify recommended instructional approaches, and then I analyzed the document to determine

the extent to which the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge for the recommended approaches were addressed.

Analysis of the Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners

To identify what instructional processes are recommended in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014), I read through the entire document a few times, making notes in the margins of thoughts that occurred to me while I read (Creswell, 2013). This process helped me gain a deeper sense of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* as a whole, and to begin to gain a sense of the details of recommended instructional approaches (Creswell, 2013). From this overview, I found that several central ideas emerged. First, the interactive instructional approach, or the whole-part-whole approach, is the driving instructional approach underlying the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners*. This approach underlies the reading continua that consists of nine reading skills each broken down into five levels of skill progression. These skills/parts also are addressed in Part 2 of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* where examples of skill-building activities are described and tasks are illustrated (i.e., task set-up, task instructions, ESL literacy skills, assessment tasks). In addition to the interactive instructional approach, I found several recommendations that promoted adjusting teaching materials and activities to meet learners' needs, and several recommendations that promoted modelling, scaffolding, and collaborative practice.

After examining the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) and identifying the ideas that emerged, I found that these ideas fit cleanly into existing literature that I was aware of based on self-directed readings as

part of my coursework for my Master of Education degree and informal professional development pursuits. For instance, the interactive instructional approach represented a stand-alone instructional process (Knowles et al., 2012). Next, the recommendation to adjust teaching to meet learners' needs fits into the provision of differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2014). Finally, the recommendations to provide modelling, scaffolding, and collaborative practice before independent practice fit into the gradual release of responsibility framework (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Wood et al., 1976).

The next step in my analysis of *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) was to determine the prevalence of the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge (i.e., Paris et al., 1983) related to the three instructional processes. Declarative knowledge represents the what, or the characteristics of the instructional processes. The procedural knowledge represents the how or the behaviours of implementing the instructional processes. The conditional knowledge represents the when and why of applying the procedures to meet the goals of the instructional processes. I have presented the prevalence and explicitness of the three types of knowledge for the three instructional approaches in Tables 1, 2, and 3. Table 1 illustrates how each type of knowledge is represented in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* for the interactive instructional approach. Table 2 illustrates how each type of knowledge is represented in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* for differentiated instruction. Table 3 illustrates how each type of knowledge is represented in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* for the gradual release of responsibility

framework. Each table includes direct quotations from the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* that I identified as being representative of each instructional process. Each table is coded to display my interpretation of whether the statement represents the declarative, procedural, or conditional knowledge, and if the information is embedded or explicit (i.e., specifically named, labelled, or within its own section). These three tables show that the majority of statements were embedded representations of the declarative and procedural knowledge for the three instructional processes. Following Tables 1, 2, and 3, I describe my findings about the explicitness of each instructional process within the four handbooks.

Interactive Instructional Approach

Within the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014), there is a section that outlines the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge around using this instructional process. The declarative knowledge is represented in the definition of the three steps of the approach and the description of how instructional phases move from an authentic task in its entirety, to breaking down the task into its components, and then returning to an authentic task again that involves the application of the parts. The procedural knowledge is represented as steps are broken down. The steps of the first whole include introducing a theme based on learners' needs, interest, and real-life tasks by drawing on learners' background knowledge, and building vocabulary. The steps of the part include focusing on cognitive and metacognitive strategies, modelling behaviours, and scaffolding. The steps for the second whole include recycling content, providing skill-using opportunities, and discussing where they can transfer the skills and strategies to other contexts.

Table 1

The Interactive Instructional Approach: Recommendations Related to the Declarative, Procedural, and Conditional Knowledge in the Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners (CCLB, 2014)

Recommendations	Type of knowledge ^a
[ESL adult literacy learners] require content that is relevant to the world outside the classroom and immediately useable in their roles as learners, parents, employees, and citizen (p. 2).	E, D
[ESL adult literacy learners] require a print-rich environment, predictable routines, explicit strategy training, repetition, spiralling, and practice (p. 2).	E, D
They need explicit instruction and support when developing ... literacy abilities (p. 10).	E, D
Motivate and engage all learners by choosing themes that link classroom experiences to learners' lives (p. 11).	E, P
An interactive instructional approach, which combines the 'whole' and 'parts' aspects of literacy teaching, is often referred to as 'whole-part-whole'. In this approach, an authentic task is presented in its entirety and then broken down into individual components or parts that the learners work through systematically before the whole is addressed again (p. 12).	SE, D
This approach reinforces the concept that every task, even if large and seemingly overwhelming, is a series of small manageable steps that can be learned and applied. The learning acquired to accomplish these small steps (or parts) can be applied and transferred to accomplish other tasks (p. 12).	SE, C
The parts are taught in reference to specific abilities, such as vocabulary building, decoding, understanding form, recognizing components of language, reading with comprehension, and reading with fluency. The focus on applying these abilities to perform meaningful and relevant tasks facilitates the use of literacy in learners' lives beyond the classroom (p. 12).	SE, DC
Instruction is planned within a context of meaningful and relevant themes, topics, and projects, focusing on tasks that are relevant and concrete for all learners. Words and phrases emerge from discussion related to learners' background knowledge, and the instructor includes selected vocabulary to shape the direction of the lesson (p. 12).	SE, DP
When learners are comfortable and confident in their understanding of the theme or topic, their attention is drawn to specific language features, such as word forms, grammar and usage conventions, and structural and organizational features. For the skill of reading, learners are also guided in identifying the purpose of a text, using pictures and graphics, predicting, and comprehending. For writing, they might develop a simple draft or outline, and then apply basic feedback and editing tactics (p. 12).	SE, PC

Recommendations	Type of knowledge ^a
Each part of the task is addressed in the manner described above before learners return again to the whole (p. 12).	SE, D
When learners again focus on the whole task, they begin to apply the learned skills (eventually simultaneously). As this practice is extended, their abilities become more fluent and they work with greater confidence to transfer skills across an increasing range of tasks (p. 12).	SE, DC
In the interactive (whole-part-whole) approach, it is important to remember that skills are not presented out of context. They come from the task at hand and are relevant and meaningful to learners (p. 12).	SE, D
When planning, instructors should consider:	SE, P
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using learners' experiences and strengths by encouraging them to talk about their ideas, background knowledge, and experiences to support the development of vocabulary, literacy, and learning skills. • Teaching learners how to use specific cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies. • Explicitly focusing on skill and concept development to address literacy needs. • Providing a good model for all language and texts used in class. • Providing collaborative experiences that promote choice, autonomy, meaningful communication, and metacognitive awareness. • Scaffolding the learning so that the learners will have success when they attempt to complete the task. • Recycling known content and language skills through different but familiar community and workplace contexts so that learners experience success and develop confidence. • Discussing with learners what was learned in the lesson and where they can transfer this skill outside the classroom into their life situations (pp. 12-13). 	

Note. All quotations are from the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014).

^a S=explicit information; E=embedded information; D= declarative knowledge;

P=procedural knowledge; C=conditional knowledge

Table 2

Differentiated Instruction: Recommendations Related to the Declarative, Procedural, and Conditional Knowledge in the Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners (CCLB, 2014)

Recommendations	Type of knowledge ^a
[ESL adult literacy learners] have special learning needs that need to be addressed in collaborative as well as individualized, flexible programming (p. 2).	E, D
A successful ESL Literacy program provides a non-threatening classroom setting where learners feel comfortable, build on their strengths, and develop literacy and language abilities through topics of study that are relevant to their lives (p. 9).	E, DC
Learners with low oral English proficiency may benefit from two supports: first language interpretation and working with others collaboratively to share knowledge and skills and to figure out tasks (pp. 9-10).	E, D
[Instructors need to] recognize that all learners need to understand the concepts, learn the language, and have an expectation for success (p. 11).	E, D
Do not assume that because the Literacy learner has relatively advanced oral skills, he/she has developed literacy skills and abilities (p. 11).	E, D
Place literacy learners in a class according to their reading and writing levels (p. 11).	E, DP
Change the pace and the type of activity often, to accommodate Literacy learners who may not be used to formal classroom settings (p. 11).	E, P
Modify learner groupings to allow learners to sometimes work with more literate learners and at other times work in groups with learners at the same level (p. 11).	E, P
Have all learners work on the same activity, but with different expectations and levels of support (differentiated instruction) (p. 11).	S, P
Provide extension activities that require transfer of skills for the more literate learners, while the Literacy learners finish their work (p. 11).	E, P

Note. All quotations are from the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014).

^a S=explicit information; E=embedded information; D= declarative knowledge; P=procedural knowledge; C=conditional knowledge

Table 3

The Gradual Release of Responsibility: Recommendations Related to the Declarative, Procedural, and Conditional Knowledge in the Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners (CCLB, 2014)

Recommendations	Type of knowledge ^a
ESL Literacy learners need considerable support, instruction, and guided practice in acquiring and applying literacy skills and strategies (p. 1).	E, D
They need explicit instruction and support when developing ... literacy abilities (p. 10).	E, C
Help all learners gain confidence by modeling and having them work collaboratively until they understand and are able to complete the tasks independently (p. 11).	E, PC
Use a variety of means to explain concepts and strategies. Move from the familiar to the unfamiliar, from more concrete to less concrete (p. 11).	E, P
Spiral the learning by returning to previously-learned material in new, more demanding contexts (p. 11).	E, P
Use volunteers in a variety of ways (i.e., to help a slower learner keep up with the lesson as it is taught to the whole group, or to provide support to more independent learners while the instructor assists those with literacy needs (p. 11).	E, P
[When planning, instructors should consider] teaching learners how to use specific cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies (p. 12).	E, D
[When planning, instructors should consider] explicitly focusing on skill and concept development to address literacy needs (p. 12).	E, D
[When planning, instructors should consider] providing a good model for all language and texts used in class (p. 12).	E, D
[When planning, instructors should consider] providing collaborative experiences that promote choice, autonomy, meaningful communication, and metacognitive awareness (p. 12).	E, D
[When planning, instructors should consider] scaffolding the learning so that the learners will have success when they attempt to complete the task (p. 12).	E, DC

Note. All quotations are from the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014).

^a S=explicit information; E=embedded information; D= declarative knowledge; P=procedural knowledge; C=conditional knowledge

The conditional knowledge is represented with the explanation that using this approach can enable learners to manage tasks independently, transfer skills to other contexts, and that it can increase their fluency and confidence. Other statements around declarative knowledge are also embedded in other sections of the document and typically refer to keeping material relevant, providing explicit instruction, and repeating and spiralling opportunities to practice.

Differentiated Instruction

Within the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014), most of the information that I connected to differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2014) was embedded declarative and procedural knowledge. Throughout the document, there was an emphasis on declarative and procedural processes that promoted differentiating instruction according to learner readiness. These recommendations included placing learners into classes based on their reading and writing benchmark levels (environment), encouraging peers to support each other through collaborative activities or use first language interpretation, building on learners' strengths, interests, and abilities, allowing learners to work at their own pace (process), using flexible grouping strategies (environment/process/content), and providing different activities (process) and materials (content) based on readiness levels. Recommendations for differentiating instruction by environment included references to designing a comfortable classroom setting that includes having an expectation of success of all learners. I did not find any reference to differentiating the product (e.g., giving learners a choice in how they demonstrate their understanding) or differentiating according to learner profile (e.g., how learners prefer to learn; Tomlinson, 2013).

The Gradual Release of Responsibility Framework

Within the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014), recommendations around providing focused instruction/modelling, guided instruction/scaffolding, and collaborative learning were embedded. The recommendations for focused instruction included providing explicit instruction, modelling, and teaching learners how to use cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies. The recommendations for guided instruction included providing learners with support, guided practice in applying the literacy skills and strategies, moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar, scaffolding, and using volunteers to provide guided instruction to individuals or groups when needed. The recommendations for collaborative learning included allowing learners to work with others to enhance learners' understanding, choice, autonomy, meaningful communication, and metacognitive awareness. Many of these recommendations refer to declarative and procedural knowledge.

To reiterate, I critically reviewed the approaches that were recommended in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) as I intended to develop a handbook that include pedagogical knowledge about using appropriate instructional approaches for teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. I also reviewed recommendations for implementation contained in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* as well as any rationale for using these instructional processes when teaching ESL adult literacy learners. Declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge about the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility framework was primarily embedded within the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy*

Learners with emphasis on the declarative and procedural aspects associated with these three approaches. As a result, instructors in the field may have difficulty accessing and implementing this instructional information. I next conducted a literature review and a critical analysis of existing handbooks to determine the extent to which the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge around the three instructional processes were addressed.

Literature Review

Following the identification of and the degree to which the pedagogical knowledge for teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners was represented in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014), I conducted a literature review on the three instructional processes. The purpose of the literature review was to deepen my knowledge about the processes and to locate these instructional processes and this handbook in existing literature (Nardi, 2014). The literature review was conducted by locating peer-reviewed journals and books through databases such as Academic Research Complete, ERIC, and Education Research Complete. The knowledge gained from the literature review was presented in chapter 2, was incorporated into the critical analysis of existing handbooks, and informed the content presented in the handbook. Specifically, the literature review developed my declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge about the three instructional processes in that it deepened my awareness of the nature of the processes, how they have been implemented, and why they may be beneficial to a variety of learners. In addition, this literature review provided a solid foundation for describing and exemplifying the instructional processes in the handbook.

Review of Existing Handbooks

A critical review of existing handbooks was conducted to determine the degree to which existing handbooks identified, explained, and justified the use of the three instructional processes in the context of teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. In determining which handbooks to review, I started with two classic handbooks (i.e., *New Language, New Literacy: Teaching Literacy to English Language Learners*, Bell, 2013; *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook*, BVC, 2009) that I found useful during my own informal professional development pursuits while I was teaching ESL adult literacy learners. To find more handbooks, I scanned the bibliographies of these handbooks and I identified two additional titles (i.e., *Adult ESL Literacy Resource Survival Guide for Instructors*, Massaro, 2004; *Making it Real: Teaching Pre-Literate Adult Refugee Students*, Croydon, 2005).

To begin the critical review of these handbooks, I approached each handbook with a specific analytical lens. I used the pre-existing themes (Creswell, 2013) (i.e., the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, the gradual release of responsibility) that I identified during the analysis of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014). In addition to these pre-existing themes, my analytical lens included looking for the explicitness of declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge presented for each of the three instructional processes. An explicit description might include naming the instructional process, defining it, and/or including its own section, subsection, or heading. For example, BVC (2009) explicitly provides declarative knowledge about the guided instruction step in the gradual release of responsibility, when they define scaffolding as follows: “Scaffolding

means exactly what it describes: a series of incremental supports for learning, providing opportunities for learners to move towards independence with greater competence, confidence, and the use of strategies” (p. 137). An embedded description represents an indirect reference to the instructional processes. Naming, defining, or providing a section that describes the instructional process is not included. For example, Massaro (2004) embeds procedural knowledge on how to differentiate process by illustrating how learners can complete different activities using the same worksheet:

Use an exercise sheet from a text to practice the skills the individuals need. You may set up a group who need[s] to practice reading with a sheet of upper and lower case alphabet cards and a card reader or tape recorder; a group who needs to practice directionality, uses the same sheet for tracing; for others, you can cut up the letters and they can match upper and lower case and/or put them in alphabetical order. (p. 36)

Massaro does not indicate explicitly that this example represents procedural knowledge of providing differentiated instruction. Rather, I identified this connection based on my knowledge of the instructional processes. In addition, while conducting the critical review of these handbooks, I limited my scope to sections focused on reading instruction and relevant instructional practices such as conducting assessments, planning lessons, and identifying learners’ needs. I excluded sections that specifically addressed other skills such as writing, speaking, listening, and numeracy.

Equipped with knowledge obtained from my prior learning experiences and literature review, I read through each handbook a few times and made notes in the margins (Creswell, 2013) about the instructional processes represented. Notes included

comments that named the instructional processes, identified if the processes were explicitly described or embedded, and determined the type of knowledge (declarative, procedural, conditional) indicated. The findings of this review are presented in Table 4. Table 4 illustrates how the explicitness of the type of knowledge for each of the three instructional processes is represented in the four handbooks. Overall, I found that each handbook touched upon some of the instructional processes and their components but these descriptions were often embedded within the texts making it difficult for readers to locate quickly. Following Table 4 is a description of my findings for each handbook.

New Language, New Literacy: Teaching Literacy to English Language Learners

In Bell's (2013) revised and updated version of the classic *A Handbook for ESL Literacy* (Bell & Burnaby, 1983), *New Language, New Literacy: Teaching Literacy to English Language Learners*, the intended purpose is to present a practical guide to inform and support instructors in identifying the needs of ESL adult literacy learners and in planning lessons based on those needs. Overall, I found that Bell embeds the three types of knowledge (declarative, procedural, and conditional) for the three instructional processes within the *New Language, New Literacy: Teaching Literacy to English Language Learners* text.

In connection to the interactive instructional approach, Bell (2013) emphasizes using a balanced literacy approach with an emphasis on moving from the whole to the part (i.e., moving from reading for meaning to breaking tasks into parts). Although this is the primary instructional emphasis of this handbook, Bell also provides examples of whole-to-part and part-to-whole approaches in the 5-8-page descriptive lesson plans outlined in chapter 11. Within chapter 6, Bell provides declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge for both top-down and bottom-up approaches to reading.

Table 4

*Representation of the Three Instructional Processes in the Context of Teaching Reading
in Existing Handbooks*

Instructional Processes	Bell (2013)	BVC (2009)	Massaro (2004)	Croydon (2005)
Interactive Instructional Approach				
Whole-to-part	E, DPC			
Part-to-whole	E, P			S, DPC
Whole-part-whole	E, P	E, DPC	E, P	
Differentiated Instruction				
Readiness	E, DPC	E, DPC	SE, DP	E, DP
Interest	E, DPC	E, D	E, D	E, D
Learning profile	E, DPC	E, D		E, D
Content	E, PC	E, DPC	SE, P	E, DP
Process	E, P	E, DPC	E, P	E, DP
Product				
Environment	E, DPC	E, P	E, PC	
The Gradual Release of Responsibility				
Focused instruction/modelling	E, D	E, PC	E, P	E, P
Guided instruction/scaffolding	E, D	SE, DPC	E, P	E, P
Collaborative learning	E, D	E, DPC	E, P	E, P
Independent learning	E, P	E,	E, P	E, P

Note. S=explicit information; E=embedded information; D= declarative knowledge;

P=procedural knowledge; C=conditional knowledge

Some top-down approaches include using the language experience approach (LEA), reading for meaning using found materials, and using total physical response (TPR). Some bottom-up approaches include teaching sight words, phonics, and word families. Bell (2013) also presents procedural knowledge for differentiating instruction based on process, product, content, and environmental factors according to students' readiness, interests, and learning profile in chapters 3, 4, and 8. For example, she suggests providing learners' with choice of material, building lessons based on learners' interests, using a variety of learner groupings, and incorporating a variety of activities and opportunities to move around the room.

Regarding the gradual release of responsibility, Bell (2013) embeds declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge for focussed instruction (e.g., stating lesson objectives, modelling) and collaborative practice opportunities throughout the book. In addition, there is an embedded reference to independent learning as Bell states that the lessons typically progress from modelling or whole-class discussion to collaborative practice before learners work independently. In chapter 10, Bell alludes to the zone of proximal development and differentiated instruction to adapt instruction based on learner needs identified through ongoing observations and assessments. While Bell addresses the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge of conducting ongoing assessments and provides declarative information about the need for contingent instruction, there is no reference to the gradual release of responsibility components of fading and the transfer of responsibility (Van de Pol et al., 2010). To sum up, Bell embeds some declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge around the three instructional processes throughout several chapters.

Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook

In 2009, BVC published this comprehensive and practical handbook that provides instructors with clear descriptions of the needs of ESL adult literacy learners, program considerations, strategies for the classroom, and illustrates the four levels of literacy (i.e., Foundation to Phase III: Johansson et al., 2001). Although the levels of learners and the reading skills and strands have changed in the revised literacy benchmarks (CCLB, 2014), BVC (2009) has done a commendable job in profiling learners at different levels, describing approaches and activities for learners at each level, instructional materials including task and material conditions, and outlining sample unit and lesson plans using the whole-part-whole instructional approach. The whole-part-whole instructional approach is also embedded in the section addressing the importance of teaching thematically.

BVC (2009) describes the what, how, and why of using theme-based planning as a way to build on learners' interests, needs, and goals can increase learners' motivation. In addition, the authors strongly recommend explicitly teaching reading strategies (procedural knowledge for focused instruction), scaffolding learning (declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge for guided instruction), providing collaborative learning opportunities (declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge), and differentiating instruction according to learners' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. For example, the section on scaffolding is followed by subsection on how to modify materials (procedural knowledge on differentiating content by readiness) and how to modify activities (procedural knowledge on differentiating process by readiness). Procedural knowledge about scaffolding is referred to again in another subsection, with a

sample lesson sequence and a sample unit plan provided (see BVC, 2009, pp. 164, 167). However, there are gaps in the degree of explicitness and full coverage of each type of knowledge for each instructional process. For example, I did not find explicit information around the declarative knowledge about differentiating the product and the environment, focused instruction, and independent learning, procedural knowledge about differentiating instruction according to interest and learning profile, or conditional knowledge about differentiating product and environment and according to interest and learning profile, plus independent learning.

Adult ESL Literacy Resource Survival Guide for Instructors

This handbook (Massaro, 2004) is a practical guide designed to inspire possible instructional responses to twelve classroom challenges identified by ESL adult literacy instructors. The premise of this handbook is based on the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978): “Find out what your learners have and build upon that knowledge” (Massaro, 2004, p. 5). I found that this handbook primarily includes procedural knowledge related to the three instructional processes. Each lesson plan includes a warm-up, presentation, practice, application, wind down, and extension ideas typically following the whole-part-whole approach. In the context of reading, Massaro includes lesson plans about how to teach emergent reading, phonics, and reading strategies. Within these lessons, declarative knowledge explaining that learners may vary according to readiness (e.g., multilevel classes) is evident, and there is some reference to mixed ability group-work that represents differentiating by process (e.g., all learners participate in a game but contribute based on their skill level). In addition, Massaro includes sections on how to differentiate content and/or process based on readiness for multi-level classes

by using stations, creating levelled tasks, adapting authentic materials, with information about providing students with choices embedded in some lessons. Massaro also embeds the need to differentiate the environment for seniors and learners under high stress by including recommendations on adapting the lighting, temperatures, seating arrangements, and having highly routine lessons. Discussion related to differentiating assessments and adapting lessons based on learners' interests and learning profiles are not included. Finally, Massaro embeds the components of the gradual release of responsibility throughout various lesson plans. While these lesson plans show how these components can be part of a lesson, declarative and conditional knowledge is not included. Instructors therefore may not know what instructional processes are represented in the handbook (declarative knowledge) or why they are important for ESL adult literacy learner success (conditional knowledge).

Making it Real: Teaching Pre-Literate Adult Refugee Students

In the final handbook that I reviewed, Croydon (2005) provides techniques and activities that support instructors in delivering instruction to pre-literate learners who have had minimal exposure to print. Croydon (2005) promotes instruction designed around learners' preferences, time, and readiness and makes reference to modelling, scaffolding, collaborative practice, and independent learning. Activity descriptions include declarative and procedural knowledge for meaning-based approaches (e.g., creating sight word sets and walls, games such as BINGO and Memory, using learner-generated stories) and part-to-whole approaches (e.g., rhyming words, make a list of words with the same initial letter, and sound discrimination). Croydon (2005) also recommends several ways to differentiate process and content based on readiness, interest

and learning profile in the section on managing a multi-level literacy class. Some recommendations include conducting a needs assessment, using a variety of activities and groupings, and providing self-access materials (i.e., anchor tasks: Tomlinson, 2011). This handbook provides excellent tips and ideas for activities to build learner skills; however, it lacks explicit explanations and exemplification of the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge around the three instructional processes.

In conclusion, I examined four existing handbooks that were designed to inform and support instructors in meeting the needs of ESL adult literacy learners. I adopted an analytical lens to assess the degree of explicitness of the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge (e.g., Paris et al., 1983) presented on the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2014), and the gradual release of responsibility framework (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Wood et al., 1976). While each handbook makes reference to each of the three instructional processes to some degree, the handbooks vary in the type of knowledge presented for each process. Typically, the handbooks present embedded how-to or procedural knowledge around the instructional processes. As these processes and types of knowledge are typically embedded, readers are left to sift through hundreds of pages of text to find definitions, procedures, and information about why these processes are important for designing reading instruction for ESL adult literacy learners. Gaining this information may be especially difficult for those readers who do not have the background knowledge required to identify the implied processes. In this way, the gaps in the types of knowledge presented about the three instructional processes is problematic as instructors may use

and adapt the lesson plans or activities without understanding why they are useful for teaching ESL adult literacy learners.

Need for the Handbook

After conducting a literature review to deepen my knowledge and locate the instructional processes in the literature, and analyzing existing handbooks for the degree of explicitness of declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge (e.g., Paris et al., 1983) for each of the three instructional processes, I have determined that no existing resources explicitly define, describe, demonstrate and discuss the when and why of each instructional process. While each instructional process is addressed to some degree in existing handbooks (i.e., Bell, 2013; BVC, 2009; Croydon, 2005; Massaro, 2004), the explanations tend to be embedded within the chapters or lesson plans and typically are not explicitly labelled or defined. As one characteristic of effective professional development includes the development of pedagogical knowledge, acquiring the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge around instructional processes has the potential to increase instructors' proficiency and skill in teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners (Guskey, 2003). Therefore, there is a need for a handbook that clearly defines and segments the instructional processes and exemplifies and labels their components in sample lesson plans. This handbook is intended to describe three instructional processes (i.e., the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, the gradual release of responsibility framework), explain their importance for teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners, and describe how to implement them. This handbook is also intended to show how to incorporate each instructional process into lesson planning. As the intentional segmentation, description, and exemplification of

the three instructional processes currently does not exist in the resources I reviewed, ESL adult literacy instructors may find it beneficial to have each process clearly described and exemplified in a way that can lead to easy use, or adaptation of, lesson plans to suit the needs of their learners.

Considerations for Handbook Design

Many adult ESL instructors seek out professional development through reading books, websites, and journals (Nassaji, 2012). Several researchers (Bartels, 2003; Nassaji, 2012; Rossiter et al., 2013) suggest that ESL instructors prefer reading texts that are relevant to their teaching experiences and context, immediately applicable to their classrooms, and accessible with respect to writing style. Typically, ESL instructors favour texts that present information that they can easily integrate into their own beliefs, values, and knowledge base and that validates and builds on their own teaching experiences and knowledge (Bartels, 2003; Borg, 2010). Rankin and Becker (2006) support the concept that instructors build knowledge by internalizing and applying it to their instructional contexts through cultural and conceptual filters:

Our study suggests rather that knowledge – in this case the knowledge embedded in published research – is not simply accumulated and then put into action. It is processed and filtered through layers of experience and belief, rendering the outcome far less predictable than a simple transmission model would suggest. Knowledge about teaching and the classroom becomes instantiated only after it has been integrated into the teacher's personal framework – contextualized, as it were, into a matrix of classroom experience and other sources of pedagogical input. (p. 366)

Ellis (2010) also states that ideas presented in texts should be viewed as “provisional” and need to be evaluated by the instructors based on their own experiences of teaching and learning.

Questioning is one process that can be used to scaffold new information (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Van de Pol et al., 2010). Therefore, I decided to include questions within the sections of the handbook to inspire personal connections to the information presented. While I cannot know the actual developmental level and zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), or adequately address the contingent learning needs (Wood et al., 1976; Wood & Wood, 1999) of all readers of this handbook, it is hoped that readers will tap into information that is personally relevant for their instructional contexts. With an emphasis on making the handbook relevant, practical, and accessible, and with the addition of questions placed throughout its sections, it is hoped that readers will be able to make connections between the information presented and their own teaching contexts.

Recruitment Procedures and Reviewers

As a teacher and a researcher, I have made pedagogical assumptions about what to include in the handbook. What I have identified as important has also surfaced as being important in the literature. In a study that examined what Canadian adult ESL instructors expect of second language acquisition research, Nassaji (2012) found that instructors want more research on instructional strategies, how to teach different learners, ability groups, and mixed classes (e.g., differentiated instruction), and the effects of the first language on subsequent language learning (e.g., the unique needs of ESL adult literacy learners). To validate the handbook presented here, it was necessary to seek the input

about the relevance, practicality, accessibility, and face validity of the handbook from instructors who work with ESL adult literacy learners.

Three practising adult ESL instructors were invited to review the handbook. These reviewers were all purposefully selected (Creswell, 2013). I chose these individuals because I have good professional rapport with each of them, they have experience in teaching literacy, they have experience in preparing documents for publication, and I view them as insightful individuals who could provide relevant feedback. All reviewers were contacted by email and asked to indicate their willingness to participate in this review. As this handbook is designed to be use by professionals in ways that assist their instruction, it was suggested that reviewers treat the handbook like any other resource that they may pick up for professional development purposes. Reviewers were not expected to review the handbook page-by-page, but rather they were encouraged to read some sections in detail and to skim through other sections. In addition, reviewers were requested to review the handbook and complete the evaluation form within 5-6 weeks, and they were invited to participate in a brief telephone conversation to discuss any comments that they would like to share and any questions I had for them about their evaluation forms. Telephone interviews were selected because I do not have direct access to all of the reviewers (Creswell, 2013).

Data Collection

Evaluative feedback of the handbook was collected through an evaluation form and an optional telephone conversation. Feedback was sought to determine the handbook's relevance, practicality, accessibility (Bartels, 2003; Borg, 2010; Nassaji, 2012; Rossiter et al., 2013), and face validity (Nardi, 2014). Face validity refers to the

degree to which something appears to be “doing what it’s supposed to be doing” (Nardi, 2014). In the context of this project, the handbook would have face validity if it appeared to address the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge (e.g., Paris et al., 1983) of using the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility for teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. In developing the evaluation form (Appendix A) for this handbook, questions centred on relevance, practicality, accessibility, face validity, and the perceived overall impression of the handbook.

For the evaluation form (Appendix A), I included open-ended questions that required the reviewers to write a short response and a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly agree, Undecided, Strongly Disagree) questionnaire that required reviewers to use a checkmark to indicate their response. Open-ended questions allow reviewers to express their thoughts and opinions using their own words and ideas (Nardi, 2014). Within the emailed invitation to participate, the reviewers were provided with an attached copy of the evaluation form and an individualized link to the uploaded copy of the handbook in Dropbox. After receiving the completed evaluation forms, I contacted each reviewer by email to determine if they were interested in and available to have a brief telephone conversation to clarify any comments or to discuss any other additional comments they would like to share.

To maintain confidentiality of the reviewers’ identity, I assigned each reviewer with an identification number (i.e., Reviewer 1, Reviewer 2, Reviewer 3). These numbers were used in communication with my advisor and second reader as well as when I saved the feedback forms and telephone conversation recordings, notes, and transcripts. All

feedback communication documentation was saved on my personal password-protected computer.

Analysis of the Data

The reviewers' responses to the evaluation forms (Appendix A) were read individually and compared to determine similarities and differences in responses. As the open-ended questions allowed reviewers to express their thoughts and opinions using their own words (Nardi, 2014), responses were read individually for specific suggestions and coded for emergent themes (Creswell, 2013). I coded the comments into categories relating to relevancy, practicality, accessibility, and validity. Upon completing this coding, I identified positive appraisals as well as areas for improvement. In addition, the closed-ended questions that were intended to assess the overall quality of the handbook and to identify any areas for improvement were also reviewed individually first and then collectively to determine what similarities and differences existed between the reviewers . The ratings that were agreeable (i.e., Strongly Agree, Agree) were considered to be favorable responses and required no revisions within the handbook. Ratings that indicated indecision (i.e., Undecided) were considered to be an area for improvement. Ratings that varied across response categories (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided) were considered to be a diverse response that required ongoing reflection and possible revisions within the handbook.

Methodological Limitations

The development, evaluation, and review of this handbook was informed by my critical analysis of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) and existing handbooks (Bell, 2013; BVC, 2009; Croydon, 2005, Massaro,

2004), along with a literature review of the targeted instructional processes. Three experienced and practicing teachers used a questionnaire that included open-ended and closed-ended questions to review the handbook.

In determining the need for the handbook, I conducted a needs assessment driven by my own knowledge and analytic skills. My initial reading through and memoing (Creswell, 2013) of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) was influenced by my instructional experiences, knowledge gained from the literature reviewed throughout my Master of Education program, and informal professional development opportunities including reading handbooks and attending conferences. In this way, the notes I made and the categories/themes I selected were limited to my current knowledge and areas of interest.

When analyzing the handbooks through the lens of looking for the degree of explicitness of the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge (e.g., Paris et al., 1983) about the three instructional processes, my analysis may have been affected by gaps in my understanding about these concepts. If at the time of reviewing these handbooks I had an incomplete understanding of the instructional processes, I may not have recognized all the references to the instructional practices. This gap could have resulted in a misrepresentation of the prevalence of the instructional elements within the handbooks. In addition, as I used the pre-existing themes, I did not analyze the handbooks for any additional features that may benefit ESL adult literacy instructors when teaching reading.

In establishing the need for this handbook, I analyzed the degree to which the types of knowledge were explicit as connected to the three instructional processes across

the four existing handbooks. I began this review by starting with handbooks that I was familiar with during my teaching practice and searched their bibliographies for additional handbooks. As I did not conduct an extended search for other handbooks on teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners, I may have missed valuable resources that could address some of the topics that I have focused on in my handbook.

In addition, while I have determined that no existing resources explicitly define, describe, demonstrate and discuss the when and why of each instructional process, I did not formally establish the need for this handbook. Even though I informally discussed the development of this project with colleagues at conferences, I did not survey adult ESL instructors for their perceptions of the need for this handbook. If I had surveyed colleagues, I may have designed this handbook with a focus on different instructional approaches or other themes. As a result of starting with handbooks that I knew and not seeking wide input from front line workers about the need for this handbook, the credibility of my needs assessment for this handbook may be affected.

However, I grounded the design for this handbook in research that indicates that ESL instructors prefer reading for informal professional development when the text is relevant, practical, and accessible (Bartels, 2003; Nassaji, 2012; Rossiter et al., 2013). I also structured the handbook around the idea that teachers value professional development that includes declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge about instructional strategies and how to meet the needs of learners (Guskey, 2003). With the intentional segmentation and labelling of the target instructional processes, it is hoped that this handbook will have face validity which was reflected in the feedback from the three reviewers.

Finally, I purposefully selected a small number of reviewers to evaluate the handbook. I selected these reviewers because of the professional rapport I had with each of them, their ESL literacy teaching experiences, their insights into teaching and learning as well as the needs of ESL adult literacy learners, and their prior experiences in providing feedback on published documents. As the number of reviewers was very small ($n=3$), their responses cannot be generalized as being representative of the greater population of ESL adult literacy instructors (Nardi, 2014). As such, voices were not heard from new teachers and teachers with limited experience with ESL adult literacy learners. Inclusion of these reviewers may have resulted in different feedback and associated revisions. This kind of input may have improved the relevance, practicality, and accessibility of this handbook for a more diverse group of readers.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE HANDBOOK

The purpose of this project was to develop a handbook that provides instructors with the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge (e.g., Paris et al., 1983) associated with interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, the gradual release of responsibility framework when teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. This need for this handbook was determined following an analysis of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) to identify instructional recommendations for teaching reading. A critical analysis of four existing handbooks (i.e., Bell, 2013; BVC, 2009; Croydon, 2005; Massaro, 2004) revealed that they each primarily addressed the procedural knowledge associated with the instructional processes and that most of the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge was embedded within the chapters. As a result, this handbook was designed to describe what the instructional processes are, how to use them, and explain why these processes are useful for teaching ESL adult literacy learners. The handbook contains three sections. First, the introduction describes the needs of ESL adult literacy learners in Canada and their unique reading needs. Second, there is an overview that includes the why, how, and why of using the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility when teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. Third, three lesson sequences exemplify how the instructional processes intersect, with each process being labeled with an icon and colour-coded text.

Three experts in the field were selected purposefully (Creswell, 2013) to review the handbook for its relevance, accessibility, practicality (Bartels, 2003; Borg, 2010; Nassaji, 2012; Rossiter et al., 2013), and face validity (Nardi, 2014). These individuals

were selected because of their extensive experience teaching ESL adult literacy learners, preparing documents for publication, and my perception of them as insightful individuals who could provide relevant feedback. The final version of the handbook presented here reflects these experts' feedback. A discussion of the feedback and associated changes are described in chapter 5. This remainder of this chapter contains the final version of the handbook, *The What, How, and Why of Teaching Reading to ESL Adult Literacy Learners*.

The What, How, and Why of Teaching Reading to ESL Adult Literacy Learners

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Introduction

I officially began my journey with English as a second language (ESL) adult literacy learners in April 2006. After three years of teaching ESL, I finally was offered a full-time, permanent teaching position at my work place when three full-time literacy classes opened. I was given a week to prepare for the classes which include finding any and all resources related to teaching **ESL adult literacy learners**. I had no knowledge about ESL literacy, of recommended instructional processes, of ideal resources, or of appropriate ways of assessing learning. I was unaware of instructional benchmarks, or key resources such as the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* (Johansson et al., 2001), or the *Revised Language Instruction to Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Literacy Component: Curriculum Guidelines* (Hutt & Young, 1997).

Through my professional network, I contacted and met with an experienced ESL literacy teacher, sat in her kitchen, drank tea, and soaked in all the information she provided. She showed me samples of learners' work that led me to revise my expectations of learner performance. She showed me manipulatives and demonstrated how she might instruct learners while using them. She gave me many first-week activity ideas to get my classes started. I felt inspired with this new information and felt ready to take on this new learning journey. Classes began and the number of students slowly increased. At work, my literacy instructor colleagues and I met monthly to share ideas, and express challenges and successes. These informal conversations allowed me to feel supported and build my knowledge collaboratively.

After six years of teaching Foundation and Phase I literacy learners, I was transferred into a Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 2, 3, 4 class in the morning, and a CLB 3, 4, 5 class in the afternoon. I found that about 30% of these

learners had fewer than 10 years of education in their first language and their educational experiences were often interrupted (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks [CCLB], 2014).

At this point, I was familiar with the CLB outcomes and approaches for teaching Foundation and Phase I literacy learners. However, the learners in these classes were working in higher levels of literacy. Again, I set off on an informal professional development pursuit to discover the best ways of teaching higher-level literacy learners. The *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* (Johansson et al., 2001), *A Handbook for ESL Literacy* (Bell & Burnaby, 1983), and *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook* (BVC, 2009) became my go-to texts. I read these texts in depth, from cover to cover, writing notes in the margins, and flagging pivotal ideas. I attended conferences (e.g., TESL Ontario, TESL Toronto, TESL Hamilton), signed up for webinars on Tutela (<https://tutela.ca>) and the ESL Literacy Network (<https://esl-literacy.com>), and searched online for related information. I pulled out the relevant and useful information that I could apply to my classes, reflected on my instructional successes and challenges, and endeavoured to make instructional changes accordingly. I also presented a few workshops on-line and at conferences to share my ideas about teaching ESL adult literacy with my colleagues.

I regretted that there were no available formal educational training opportunities (i.e., diplomas or degrees in teaching ESL adult literacy), and I optimized the informal professional development opportunities that I could access. Over time, I realized that I wanted to formalize my education and decided to do a Master of Education (MEd) degree on teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. This handbook is part of the final product for this degree.

While I was completing my MEd degree, I was hired as a contributing writer for the revisions of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* (Johansson et al., 2001), which resulted in the publication of the *Canadian*

Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners (CCLB, 2014). Taking part in these revisions allowed me to learn about other instructional experiences across Canada, learn from my colleagues' experience and expertise, engage in many conversations about the needs and skill development of ESL adult literacy learners, and meet amazing and inspiring ESL literacy professionals across the country. I am grateful to have been selected to provide input into the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014).

This handbook emerged from my interest in helping instructors meet the needs of the diverse ESL adult literacy learners in their classes anywhere from designated ESL literacy classes to Canadian Language Benchmark level 4 classes. In reflecting on my own professional development and areas of interest as an instructor and a researcher, I decided to create a handbook that addresses the **declarative knowledge** (i.e., what is it), **procedural knowledge** (i.e., how to do it), and **conditional knowledge** (i.e., when and why to use it) (e.g., Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1983) for teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners based on instructional recommendations within the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014). I identified three foundational instructional processes within the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) including the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility framework.

These instructional processes are not exclusive to reading instruction and can also be applicable to the instruction of others skills such as listening, speaking, and writing. Furthermore, they are not the only processes available to ESL instructors. By focusing on these three instructional approaches for teaching reading, I am not suggesting that other approaches are less efficient, valid, or appropriate for teaching ESL adult literacy learners. Rather, I selected these processes because of my own experiences that informed how I read through the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014). The only process that is explicitly recommended within the *Canadian Language*

Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners (CCLB, 2014) is the interactive instructional approach. I identified the other two approaches based on knowledge gained through informal and formal professional development opportunities.

Research on ESL adult literacy learners in general is limited, but growing (e.g., National Institute for Literacy, 2010; Tarone & Bigelow, 2012). Literature referenced in this handbook draws on studies that were conducted with ESL adult literacy learners, ESL learners, adult literacy learners, and children. While findings from studies on children and other populations may or may not be directly applicable to the context of ESL adult literacy learners, comparisons may be drawn and evaluated if instructors implement and reflect on the effectiveness of the recommended strategies in their own instructional contexts (Peyton, Moore, & Young, 2010). In addition, some studies have found that direct comparisons can be made between second language adult literacy learners and children. For example, Kurvers (2015) found that second language adult literacy readers followed the same developmental stages as children when developing their word recognition and spelling skills. As an instructor, you will need to select which processes make sense for you and your learners, and incorporate the elements that work for you.

As an instructor, you will need to select which processes make sense for you and your learners, and incorporate the elements that work for you.

Intentions of this Handbook

This handbook is intended to describe three instructional processes (i.e., the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility framework), to explain their importance for teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners, and to describe how to implement them. I have dedicated a chapter for each instructional process and segmented each

chapter into three subsections: What is it? How do we use it? Why is it useful for ESL adult literacy learners? As an ESL adult literacy instructor who has sought out informal professional development opportunities (e.g., attending and presenting workshops and webinars, reading handbooks, searching online, collaborating with colleagues) related to teaching ESL adult literacy over the last decade, I have found the need for a handbook that clearly segments, exemplifies, and labels the components of the three instructional approaches in the context of teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. There are several existing handbooks (e.g., Bell, 2013; Bow Valley College, 2009; Croydon, 2005; Massaro, 2004) that address these instructional processes to some degree, and I have poured through them during my own informal professional development. However, I found that the information related to these three instructional processes most often is embedded within chapters. As a reader, I felt that I was required to have a deep understanding of the instructional processes in order to identify their use throughout the pages and chapters of the different handbooks. I wanted to create a handbook where these processes were explicitly identified and discussed.

I hope that the ideas and information in this handbook are relevant, practical, and accessible to instructors who are either new to, or experienced in teaching ESL adult literacy learners. I hope that readers will explore the ideas and information presented in this handbook to enhance their understanding of their work and build on their existing knowledge of the what, how, and why of teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners.

How to Use this Handbook

Sections of this Handbook

This document is divided into three sections. The first section contains two chapters and provides an overview of ESL adult literacy learners in Canada as well as an overview of the nature of reading and the unique reading needs of ESL

adult literacy learners.

The second section contains three chapters and provides the what, how, and why of using the three instructional processes (i.e., the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, the gradual release of responsibility framework) in the context of teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. Each chapter is dedicated to one instructional process. Throughout the chapters, I provide descriptive examples of the processes in context. I have created three composite learners (Mu, Andres, and Adama) who represent low, mid, and high-level literacy learners, respectively. These narrative descriptions are intended to show instructors what the processes could look like in context and how the processes might emerge in lessons.

Building on the examples in context within Section Two, the third section presents three detailed lesson plans – one for Mu, one for Andres, and one for Adama. These lesson plans are coded with icons and colour-coded words that represent each of the instructional processes. The purpose of these lesson plans is for instructors to have a clear idea of some possibilities for bringing together the three instructional processes. Instructors can feel free to use and/or adapt the lesson plans for their own classes.

Glossary of Terms

The glossary of terms at the end of this handbook includes commonly referred to acronyms and terms used throughout this handbook.

Reflection Questions

As you have picked up this handbook, I assume that you did so because you are engaged in your own informal and ongoing professional development. To stay up-to-date in our field of teaching ESL and ESL adult literacy, it is necessary to continually learn and integrate our learning into our practice. As we come across new information, ideas, and ways of teaching, we may begin to analyze the

effectiveness of our instructional practices, reflect on what works and what does not work with our particular learners, change things when they are not working well, and continually explore opportunities for improvement (Guskey, 2000).

To build on this perspective of professional learning, I incorporated reflection questions at the beginning and end of all the chapters, and in the middle of Chapters 1, 2 and 3. My reason for doing this stems from my belief that as readers and professionals, we integrate new information into our existing knowledge well when we connect it to our lives (Rankin & Becker, 2006). I view this handbook as a presentation of information, ideas, and ways of teaching that instructors can elect to integrate into their own personal frameworks and contextualize into their own classroom experiences (Rankin & Becker, 2006). I do not believe that any two readers will read this handbook in the same way as all readers bring their own background knowledge, pedagogical histories and experiences, motivation, and goals for picking up this handbook. The questions are intended as guides to support you in making sense of the information presented, validating the ideas and concepts that you are already incorporating into your class, identifying what information is new, and thinking about what is reasonable and inspiring for you to begin in your classes (Borg, 2010).

The questions are organized around the same concepts for each chapter. The pre-reading questions are intended to have you activate your background knowledge about ideas to come in the chapter. What do you already know about the topic? What are some of your beliefs and ideas about the topic? The during-reading questions are intended to encourage you to reflect on and explain important ideas in your own words. What did that chapter mean to you? How does this connect to what you are already doing? What points were important for you? The post-reading questions are intended to encourage you to identify what you can do with the ideas and information. What are some things you can try in your next class?

In addition, you may have come to this handbook with some professional development goals in mind. Perhaps you want to learn more about ESL adult literacy learners. Maybe you are looking for new ways to teach reading. Maybe you have heard some terms addressed in this handbook and want to learn more about them. Maybe you want validation of your current practices. Whatever your goals were in picking up this handbook, write them down, review them as you read, and see if and how the ideas and information presented in this handbook support you in reaching your goals, what questions are answered, and what questions are still lingering.

While reading, feel free to make notes in the handbook, code the margins in the handbook (e.g., ✓ = yes, I do this already; ? = I have a question about this; * = new idea), write an ongoing reflection journal, or make connections to the text in a way that works for you. Although you may elect to skip these questions altogether, I believe that considering your responses to these questions has the potential to deepen your engagement with the ideas in this handbook.

References to Learners

In this handbook, I have created composite learners to demonstrate how the instructional processes can be implemented with learners at different literacy levels. In my attempts to create these composite learners, I have drawn on the life experiences, personalities, needs of, and literacy skills and strategies used by a variety of ESL adult literacy learners that I have met, worked with, and heard about. I have also incorporated my knowledge about ESL adult literacy learners in general that I developed during my professional development endeavours. Any likeness to any real individual is unintended.

Section One:

The Needs of ESL Adult Literacy Learners

Chapter 1: ESL Adult Literacy Learners in Canada

Pre-Reading Questions

How do you define literacy?

How did you develop your literacy skills?

Think of the students that you have taught. How is literacy a part of their lives?

What is literacy?

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2005) defines literacy as the development of cognitive skills that enable individuals to become life-long and self-directed learners. Their definition of **literacy** is

... the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potential, and participate fully in community and wider society (UNESCO, 2005).

Literacy is both a **cognitive skill development** process and a **social practice**.

This means that literacy development includes learning discrete skills and strategies such as decoding, making predictions about the content of text based on the title or images, scanning a directory to find an office location, and

Literacy is both a cognitive skill development process and a social practice.

acquiring the values, attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and social relationships around literacy practices (Purcell-Gates, Jacobson, & Degener, 2004). Purcell-Gates et al. (2004) describe how cognitive skills and social practices could be embedded in the process of paying bills. When paying bills, observable cognitive literacy activities may include reading the bill to determine the amount owing, writing a cheque, writing an address on an envelope, and affixing a stamp. After determining the amount owing, others may pay on-line using a computer to log into an account, type the bank's web address in the URL bar, log-in to the bank account, select the bill to pay, record the payment confirmation number, and log-out of the bank account. No matter the method of payment, these literacy activities also are shaped by the social practices of literacy. The social practices of paying bills may be shaped by attitudes (e.g., paying bills is not a pleasurable activity), beliefs (e.g., it's important to pay bills on time), values (e.g., people

should be accountable and pay their debts), feelings (e.g., people worry about not having enough money to pay their bills), power relations (e.g., the company can cut off power if bills are not paid), and social relationship (e.g., one's family will suffer if the electricity is cut off) (Purcell-Gates et al., 2004).

These literacy skills and social practices are developed in a variety of ways over time. At the beginning of life, children are born into diverse socio-cultural communities that use and value literacy skills and social practices to varying degrees (Purcell-Gates et al., 2004). Some children are born into socio-cultural environments in which they are immersed in print literacy environments from the day they are born, and others are born into environments that have little or no print literacy exposure (Purcell-Gates et al., 2004). Some children are born to parents with high literacy skills, and others are born to parents with limited to no literacy skills. While these environments are not static or fixed, and individuals can change their literacy skills and social practices over time, early exposure to literate environments socializes children into literacy practices. Over time, access to and engagement in literacy practices can be limited or expanded based on a variety of factors (e.g., home responsibilities, health, war) (CCLB, 2014). As individuals enter into adulthood, their prior literacy exposure and experiences can result in individuals having unique literacy and learning needs.

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Descriptions of ESL Adult Literacy Learners

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2014) defines being **functionally literate** as being able to both read and write with understanding a short simple statement in everyday life and to make simple arithmetic calculations. Learners who are functionally literate in their first language typically have a high number of literacy skills, concepts, and strategies that they can transfer into learning a new language such as English as a subsequent language (ESL). In Ontario, these learners could be enrolled in mainstream adult ESL or LINC classes.

ESL adult literacy learners are individuals who are learning ESL but are not functionally literate in their first language. These learners are learning to communicate in English while developing their literacy skills (e.g., reading, writing, and numeracy). Typically these learners have had fewer than 10 years of formal schooling in their first language, and this schooling may have been interrupted by various factors such as war, poverty, family responsibilities, or illness (CCLB, 2014).

Three categories describe degrees of literacy needs based on prior print literacy exposure and experience: pre-literate, semi-literate, and non-literate learners (CCLB, 2014). **Pre-literate learners** come from an environment in which there was minimal, if any, exposure to print. Some individuals may come from languages that have no, or recently developed, writing systems such as Somali. Others may have lived in environments in which there was minimal or no opportunities to engage with print. Pre-literate learners typically need to start with developing awareness that print has meaning. They will need to build awareness of the purposes of print and of visual images (Bell, 2013). Individuals from these societies tend to rely on oral memory to share information and may have well-trained memories (Bell, 2013).

Non-literate learners come from a print-rich and literate society, but did not learn to read or write often due to socioeconomic reasons. They are not functionally literate in their first language. These learners are typically aware that print has meaning and of the purposes of print, as they may have seen street signs in their communities, people reading newspapers, or religious leaders reading from religious texts (Bell, 2013). These learners need to develop basic literacy skills, strategies, and concepts to be able to engage with the print around them. They may need to start with developing visual literacy skills and phonemic awareness.

Semi-literate learners come from a print-rich and literate society. They started but did not complete school for a variety of reasons such as war or family responsibilities. Semi-literate learners are not functionally literate in their first language. These learners are aware that print has meaning, and they may demonstrate the ability to transfer some literacy skills, strategies, and concepts to learning a new language. However, as they did not complete their schooling, they have gaps in their literacy skills, strategies, and concepts. They need support in developing phonemic awareness, comprehension strategies, and metacognitive awareness about their learning. Like the other two classifications of learners, semi-literate learners also may need to be taught study skills (National Institute for Literacy, 2010).

Semi-literate learners are unique in that they have had some schooling experiences in their first language. Because of this they may have developed different feelings and attitudes towards school and may have diverse perceptions of themselves as learners (Bell, 2013). For example, I had a new semi-literate learner arrive in my mixed mainstream ESL and literacy class. Usually when new learners start my class, I invite all the learners to introduce themselves, and for new students to introduce themselves in turn. When this particular learner introduced herself, she apologized to me. She informed me that she was a bad student and that it took her a long time to learn anything. This floored me! I

wondered what her prior learning experiences had been and what had led to this perception. After this admission, I made sure to provide this learner with many supports and drew attention to any successes that she (and other students,) made in their learning and use of skills and strategies.

In addition, some semi-literate learners may be comfortable in class and others may be frightened. For example, one semi-literate learner I had in a designated literacy class a several years ago was terrified to come to class because in her previous schooling experiences children were beaten when they answered incorrectly or were late. A family member told me that it took one year of coaxing from her children and nieces to get her to even enter the school. When she arrived at my door, I did not know this, and I welcomed her in. Over time her perceptions of school changed as she learned that adult classes can be encouraging and supportive.

During-Reading Questions

Consider what you know about the early literacy experiences of learners in your class.

What does your knowledge about these experiences tell you about your learners' needs?

What is Reading?

As fluent and skilled readers, we read many different kinds of texts for many purposes every day. We may scan a directory for a store location, we may skim an article to find the main idea, we may read to find details in a job advertisement, or we may read leisurely before falling asleep at night. To arrive at fluent, functionally literate reading abilities, we have practised reading over many years with a variety of supports, in a variety of contexts, and for a variety of purposes (Bell, 2013).

Skilled readers multitask while reading by using a variety of skills and strategies at the same time (Grabe & Stoller, 2013; NRP, 2000). **Skilled reading** involves being able to recognize words, attach meaning to those words, comprehend the words as they are strung together in sentences and paragraphs, understand when **comprehension** is challenged, and know what to do when comprehension is difficult. For example, every night before I go to bed, I read a few pages of a novel. As a skilled and fluent reader, I easily recognize almost all of the words I come across. If I see a new word, I know how to break it down into sounds to decode it. If I do not know the meaning of the word, I know I have the option of guessing the meaning from the context (i.e., the semantic and syntactic cues) or using a dictionary to look it up. Some nights I am more tired than other nights, and I find myself reading the same paragraph over and over again, and realize that I am not retaining anything. At this point, I put away the book and go to sleep. Other times, if I find that something in the story does not make sense, then I reread the sentence or paragraph or even flip back to earlier parts of the book to try to make sense of the story. I constantly make predictions about what will happen in the plot and to the characters. I adjust my predictions as I read because new information is revealed and the plot line and characters develop. Generally, I find that when novels have rich descriptions, I can recall the setting at any point of the day, and I have even dreamed that I was in the setting of some novels.

Some Unique Reading Needs of ESL Adult Literacy Learners

As described earlier in this chapter, ESL adult literacy learners have interrupted educational backgrounds in their first language and therefore have gaps in their literacy skills, strategies, and concepts. As these individuals are not functionally literate in their first language, they may have few if any literacy skills, concepts, or strategies to transfer from their first to a subsequent language (UNESCO, 2014). Because of these gaps in their formal education, ESL adult literacy learners

Because of these gaps in their formal education, ESL adult literacy learners required specific instructional supports that are grounded in their unique needs.

required specific instructional supports that are grounded in their unique needs. In this section, I provide some examples and explanations of some of the unique learning needs that I have observed in my learners over the years. I discuss the importance of developing oral language and vocabulary skills, of developing conceptual knowledge and comprehension, of developing metalinguistic awareness, developing metacognitive strategies, and developing visual literacy skills. I also describe other needs including providing instruction on applying the alphabetic principle and reading fluently. I conclude this section with a discussion of the strengths of ESL adult literacy learners. As instructors, becoming aware of the unique reading needs of our learners can help us to design effective lessons and support learners in developing their literacy skills.

Oral Language and Vocabulary

One of the reading challenges that I became aware of through my instructional experiences is the importance of developing oral vocabulary and sentence structure before requiring students to work with the print version. When I first started teaching ESL adult literacy, I realized pretty quickly that if my low-level literacy learners did not have the item in their oral vocabulary first, I could not expect them to understand it in print: “When the word is not in the learner's

oral vocabulary, it will not be understood when it occurs in print.... Oral vocabulary is a key to learning to make the transition from oral to written forms.” (NRP, 2000, p. 4.3).

At this phase of their literacy development, these low-level literacy learners did not possess word attack skills or the contextual knowledge that is required to make educated guesses about unknown words (Bell & Burnaby, 1983). When learners approach a text equipped with the oral vocabulary and syntactic knowledge relevant to the text, they tend to experience greater success than those without that knowledge (CCLB, 2014; Condelli & Wrigley, 2004; Vinogradov & Bigelow, 2010). In fact, learners who have greater repertoires of oral vocabulary and sentence structure are better able to process and comprehend appropriately-leveled texts than those with smaller oral vocabularies (Lesaux, Geva, Koda, Siegel, & Shanahan, 2008).

“When the word is not in the learner’s oral vocabulary, it will not be understood when it occurs in print.... Oral vocabulary is a key to learning to make the transition from oral to written forms” (NRP, 2000, p. 4.3).

After several years of teaching low-level literacy learners, I was transferred to teaching mid-level literacy learners. With these learners, I found that developing oral vocabulary and sentence structure before reading remained indispensable for reading success. Even at this higher level, many of these learners also had gaps in their abilities to make educated guesses about unknown words. Pre-reading activities such as preteaching vocabulary, and teaching important concepts prior to reading support learners in their understanding of the content. In essence, the benefits of developing oral vocabulary and sentence structure before reading is two-fold: (1) knowing more words helps readers understand concepts clearly, and (2) having greater conceptual knowledge increases comprehension of the text (Bell & Burnaby, 1983; BVC, 2009; Kruidenier, 2002; NRP, 2000).

Conceptual Knowledge and Comprehension

Many ESL adult literacy learners have gaps in their general conceptual knowledge and these gaps can affect comprehension. As ESL adult literacy learners by definition have completed fewer than 10 years of education in their first language, many of these learners have gaps in general knowledge in areas such as geography, science, and the universe as these subjects are studied in many elementary and/or high schools (BVC, 2009). Sometimes, as instructors we may not know what gaps learners have, and it is essential to teach the concepts when questions arise. Unfamiliarity with the content can impede comprehension more than unfamiliar language structures (Carrell, 1994; as cited in Tindall & Nisbett, 2010).

Unfamiliar content impedes comprehension more than unfamiliar language structures (Carrell, 1994, as cited in Tindall & Nisbett, 2010).

I found this to be true when in preparation for our yearly trip to a local tropical greenhouse, learners in my mixed mainstream and literacy class made predictions about what they might see on the trip. One literacy learner asked what ‘tropical’ meant. I was unsure as to whether this was a vocabulary question or a conceptual knowledge question, so I turned to the world map, and pointed out the latitude lines for the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn and talked about word forms (i.e., tropics, tropical). I saw learners who had completed high school in their first language, nod their heads and make notes in their workbooks, as this was a concept with which they were familiar. However, the student who asked this question looked at me with a blank stare. This response indicated to me that this learner had a conceptual gap that I could address in class – a teachable moment! I turned this question into a lesson on the earth’s rotation around the sun and the seasons and came back to it over a few days. Even though the mainstream ESL learners in my class already knew this content, I taught it to the whole class.

One question that I often hear from colleagues about teaching concepts that may be familiar to some learners and unfamiliar to other learners is, “Should we teach it to everyone or just the learners who have the gap?” In this context, I felt that it was valuable to teach this content to all the learners because while the ESL literacy learner in question was learning the new concept, other students were learning the English vocabulary for a familiar subject.

More specifically, in the context of reading, many ESL adult literacy learners benefit from explicit instruction in reading strategies that can set up learners for increased comprehension. Comparable to the importance of developing oral vocabulary and sentence patterns before approaching the printed form, ESL adult literacy learners can also benefit from explicit instruction in the what, how, and why of using pre-reading strategies associated with increased comprehension. In addition to preteaching vocabulary and concepts, instructors can model and provide guided instruction on pre-reading strategies such as previewing the text, activating background knowledge, setting purposes, and making, checking, and changing predictions (Almasi & Fullerton, 2012; Tindall, 2010). Using these kinds of strategies with learners can support them in moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar by establishing what they already know, and supporting them in integrating the new content and concepts into their existing schema of knowledge (Almasi & Fullerton, 2012).

Metalinguistic Awareness

Another common gap in literacy development between ESL adult literacy learners and mainstream ESL/LINC learners is their metalinguistic awareness. **Metalinguistic awareness** is a trained skill requiring knowledge of specific terms and ways of talking and thinking about language using terminology such as *sentence, noun, verb, clause, or preposition* (National Institute for Literacy, 2010). Many ESL adult literacy learners have never been taught or thought about their first language in these terms. Metalinguistic awareness needs to be taught

explicitly as thinking about language using these grammatical concepts and terminology occurs through instruction, and does not occur naturally (National Institute for Literacy, 2010). When teaching low level literacy learners, I have often used hand gestures that indicate past, present, and future time (e.g., a wave over the shoulders means the past, pointing a finger to the ground means the present, and a wave away from the body indicates the future). With these learners, I also used words like, “yesterday,” “today,” and “tomorrow” to refer to the simple tenses. As ESL adult literacy learners progress, they will need to know the correct terminology and build their conceptual understanding for talking

Metalinguistic awareness needs to be taught explicitly as thinking about language using these grammatical concepts and terminology occurs through instruction, and does not occur naturally (National Institute for Literacy, 2010).

about language. Instructors can determine at which point it is appropriate and helpful to introduce metalinguistic knowledge and provide ESL adult literacy learners with this new tool for talking about language and its structure.

Metacognitive Strategies

One comment I have heard from colleagues regarding unique challenges for ESL adult literacy learners is that, “They just do not know how to learn”. In my own classes, I have observed that some ESL adult literacy learners have not yet developed school-related habits such as coming to class on time and with the required tools for learning such as their binders, pencils, and glasses. Some learners have demonstrated challenges with distinguishing what they have learned in a day or during the week when asked to reflect on their learning. In addition, some other learners have experienced frustration when reading orally because they read slowly and are often overly focused on sounding out the words at the expense of paying attention to the context. Perhaps this is because they perceive reading to be an act of decoding, not an act of meaning-making (Bell &

Burnaby, 1983; Kruidenier, 2002; McShane, 2005).

These challenges represent some gaps in awareness of and use of metacognitive strategies. These examples demonstrated gaps in knowing how to plan for learning, how to think about the learning process, and how to monitor comprehension or production while it is taking place. Because metacognitive strategies typically are developed and reinforced while in school, some ESL adult literacy learners may have a lack of or an underdeveloped awareness in these areas (O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo, & Küpper, 1985). ESL adult literacy learners require explicit instruction in these as well as other metacognitive strategies such as how to self-monitor for comprehension, how to deal with unfamiliar words, how and when to use fix-up strategies (e.g., rereading, asking for help, using reference material), and how and when to use comprehension strategies (e.g., activating prior knowledge, asking questions about the text) (Cromley, 2005). Explicit instruction in the use of metacognitive strategies can support ESL adult literacy learners in learning how to learn, and monitoring their own learning. Supporting ESL adult literacy learners in developing metacognitive awareness and strategies can put learners on the path towards becoming independent readers.

Explicit instruction in the use of metacognitive strategies can support ESL adult literacy learners in learning how to learn, and monitoring their own learning.

Visual Literacy Development

Another unique challenge some ESL adult literacy learners experience as part of learning how to read relates to their **visual literacy**, or their ability to understand pictures and other visual messages such as film and body language (Arbuckle, 2004). When I first started teaching ESL adult literacy, I was informed by more experienced colleagues that using photographs was better than using drawings, and colour images were better than black and white images. While I

did not know this at the time, this knowledge comes from research that found that low-literate individuals are better able to understand two-dimensional images (e.g., pictures) when the images are realistic and coloured than when they are stylized, iconic, or symbolic (Reis, Faísca, Ingvar, & Petersson, 2006; Reis, Guerreiro, & Castro-Caldas, 1994). As a new teacher equipped with this knowledge, I bought packages of theme-appropriate images from a teachers' store and created a photo reference binder that I filled with images cut out of magazines and flyers.

I knew that these colourful and realistic images were ideal for ESL adult literacy learners, but I did not know why. Over time, I came to understand that learners who grew up with no or limited exposure to print often were confused when looking at some images. This confusion arose because they were unfamiliar with interpreting more stylistic elements of images such as the use of wavy lines to indicate heat, shading to indicate shadows or that containers are full, or that sizes of objects may vary due to the use of perspective (Arbuckle, 2004; National Institute for Literacy, 2010; Hvitfeldt, 1985).

Within my own classes, I found that learners at all levels of literacy development have the potential to struggle with interpreting stylistic images. One example of a mid-level literacy learner who exhibited some confusion over a stylized image can be seen when I was conducting a summative speaking assessment with her. The task was to look at a drawing of a woman and role-play a conversation with her. The image in this particular book was a black and white line drawing of a woman from the waist up. The bottom of this image was stylistically angled from the woman's right hip up to her upper left arm. The student whom I was assessing said to me, "Teacher, no arm?" She was concerned that this woman was missing a limb and was not aware that the arm was missing due to artistic license.

As instructors, we need to consider the purpose and clarity of images in the

resources we select or create. Images are frequently used in adult ESL resources to activate background knowledge, provide context for reading, build comprehension, and clarify meaning. Images can be used to promote oral communication and vocabulary development, and can aid in text comprehension (Adams, 1990; as cited in Torcasio & Sweller, 2010). However, when individuals are unable to interpret images, or when images are confusing, learners may focus too much on trying to read the picture. This can distract learners and limit the cognitive energy available for other reading tasks such as decoding words and comprehending the text (Torcasio & Sweller, 2010). Therefore, it is essential that instructors pay attention to images that are within resources, and intentionally discuss the images, including stylistic considerations, with ESL adult literacy learners as often as possible.

As instructors, we need to consider the purpose and clarity of images in the resources we select or create.

We know that visual literacy skills are developed through exposure to images and are learned in school as students learn to draw. Like metalinguistic awareness, visual literacy skills are taught and do not emerge naturally (Arbuckle, 2004; Castro-Caldas, 2004; Kolinsky et al., 1987). Many ESL adult literacy learners benefit from spending class time discussing images on our handouts in ways that examine the compositional design, purpose of the image, and at higher levels deconstructs the images and critically examines them. For example, at lower-levels, discussions and activities about images might start with understanding that images represent real items by matching photographs to real items (realia). Mid-level learners might benefit from learning that design elements that carry meaning such as that angled eyebrows indicate anger. Instructors could have learners produce their own images to reinforce their understanding of these design elements (McConnell, 2014). For example, in the context of discussing landlord-tenant issues, learners could use symbolic elements to indicate housing problems. Wavy lines above an air conditioner

could represent 'heat', meaning that it is broken. Tear drops at the bottom of a window could indicate a leaky window. Learners could then use their images in skill-building activities to practise describing their housing problems. In addition, high-level literacy learners could examine the prevalence and prominence of individuals with diverse genders, sexualities, (dis)abilities, ethnicities, ages, socio-economic statuses in resources and consider if and how these aspects promote stereotypes or power imbalances (St. Joseph Immigrant Women's Centre, 2006).

Other Needs

The unique reading needs outlined above represent a small number of needs ESL adult literacy learners have when it comes to reading. Many ESL adult literacy learners benefit from explicit instruction in applying the **alphabetic principle** which includes **phonological awareness** (awareness or knowledge that spoken language is made up of sounds), **phonemic awareness** (ability to focus on and manipulate phonemes in spoken words), and **word analysis** (letter-sound correspondence or phonics) (Kruidenier, MacArthur, & Wrigley, 2010). Instruction in these areas is important because learners may need support in hearing and producing the sounds that are unique to the English language (Tindall & Nisbet, 2010). In addition, many ESL adult literacy learners tend to hear sentences holistically without realizing that words are phonological entities, so identifying word boundaries can be challenging and requires instruction. Identifying how sentences break into words and how words break into phonemes is not easy for learners and needs to be taught explicitly (National Institute for Literacy, 2010; NRP, 2000). Furthermore, learning to read affects the way the brain processes oral language. When we learn to read, our brains develop an internal representation of spoken language by connecting letters and sounds (Castro-Caldas, Petersson, Reis, Stone-Elander, & Ingvar, 1998), and some research has found that adult literacy learners are slower at processing and repeating pseudowords (e.g., skridge) than literate participants

(Castro-Caldas et al., 1998; Kosmidis, Tsapkini, & Folia, 2006; Petersson, Reis, Askelöf, Castro-Caldas, & Ingvar, 2000). In other studies that examined what parts of the brain readers use found that individuals who learned to read as an adult used fewer and different parts of their brains than individuals who learned to read as a child (Castro-Caldas, 2004). As ESL adult literacy learners develop phonemic awareness and word analysis skills they are also developing new neural pathways, so they require explicit instruction and lots of repetition (Birch, 2015; National Institute for Literacy, 2010; Tindall & Nisbet, 2010).

ESL adult literacy learners may also experience difficulties when trying to read fluently, and they require explicit instruction in developing skills and strategies to support them. As **fluency** refers to being able to read accurately, with speed, and with comprehension in both silent and oral reading (Birch, 2015), instruction must include a variety of skills and strategies. For example, some ESL adult literacy learners need to understand that print carries meaning and to learn to track from left to right. Others may need to develop oral vocabulary, background knowledge, and purposes of intonation changes associated with punctuation. Others need to develop self-monitoring and self-correcting skills and strategies and to use these while reading. And others still may struggle with oral reading anxiety (Birch, 2015) and need to build confidence and coping strategies for oral reading. ESL adult literacy learners may also need support in understanding that reading is a meaning-making activity as opposed to only a decoding activity (Bell & Burnaby, 1983; Kruidenier, 2002; McShane, 2005). Good reading is essentially a multitasking activity, and ESL adult literacy learners need to develop their abilities to use word recognition skills, comprehension skills, and decoding skills as necessary.

Strengths

One of the many things I have learned over my ESL adult literacy instructional career is that the individuals I have taught are all interesting, able, and

competent individuals who have led full lives, are valued members of their communities, and have experienced a wide variety of injustices, challenges, and successes. These individuals have demonstrated remarkable survival skills, navigated complex systems such as bureaucracies, worked, and raised families (National Institute for Literacy, 2010). These experiences and strengths need to be valued and tapped into during instruction (Bow Valley College, 2009; National Institute for Literacy, 2010; Vinogradov, 2008). ESL adult literacy learners typically learn best when content is directly related to and connected to their lives (Tindall & Nisbett, 2010; Vinogradov, 2008). There are various ways to incorporate learners' life experiences and interests into class. One way is to ask learners about their lives in group discussions or peer interviews. Instructors can create classroom material based on learners' experiences through the language experience approach (LEA) or having learners record their own stories. Learners could teach the class something that they are good at (e.g., sharing a recipe, how to use an on-line dictionary). Instructors should also activate background knowledge about the content and indicate clearly what links can be made to prior life and learning experiences. Incorporating learners' lives, experiences, interests, and strengths into instructional design and activities can motivate and engage learners.

Profiles of Learners

I created profiles of three learners for the purpose of building continuity in the handbook while exemplifying the ideas and information. I hope that these profiles establish a relatable context for the reader. These learners, as described here, are composite learners and are based on several individuals I have met, taught, and heard of during the course of my ESL adult literacy professional career. These profiles are not intended to represent any specific learner or be representative of any group of learners in general (e.g., country, gender, level).



(Peter, 2015)

Mu is a Karen refugee from Burma who spent close to two decades in a refugee camp in Thailand. As a recent newcomer to Canada, Mu was placed in a Foundation literacy class as she has never attended school and is

classified as a pre-literate learner. Even though Karen has

a written script, Mu was not exposed to print in her daily life. Since she relocated to Canada, she has started developing the concept that print has meaning as she is exposed to print regularly in her daily life such as seeing billboards and street signs when she walks to school. She also sees price tags, sale signs, and food labels when she goes shopping, and she receives date and time cards for various appointments with doctors or settlement counsellors. She is beginning to understand that there are letters in the English alphabet, but does not know any of the sounds.

Mu was a weaver back home and has made elaborate patterns that she sewed into shirts and sarongs. She has great attention to detail, and a high level of design skills. In English class, she needs to develop the controlled eye movements required for reading English (i.e., left-to-right and top-to-bottom). As she has limited print literacy exposure, she would benefit most from starting with real items (i.e., realia) and photographs of concrete items to build vocabulary and to build the concept that text has meaning.

Mu has planned for and monitored her progress while she weaved. For example, she gathered the required threads and planned out which pattern she would make before starting a new weaving project. These metacognitive skills could be tapped into in a classroom setting if the instructor promotes planning in advance

of tasks and connections are made between previous experiences and new learning experiences. Instructors could ask learners like Mu what they did before starting a task such as weaving (e.g., gather the materials and tools), and state that in school, we need special materials and tools too (e.g., paper, pencils). For example, if learners are going to copy shapes, the instructor might demonstrate or tell learners that learners they need take out paper, a pencil, and an eraser before starting just like they needed to take out the material, the loom, and the shuttle before weaving. Later, this instruction can be faded, and instructors can eventually ask, rather than tell, learners what tools they might need to complete the task.

Mu has no metalinguistic knowledge of her first language. At her CLB speaking level, lots of oral repetition of phrases and sentences will benefit her in building up an awareness of language patterns (e.g., adjective + noun, subject + verb).

Mu has limited English comprehension skills. She needs support in activating her background knowledge and in developing vocabulary and concepts. She would benefit from observing models of skill and strategy use before she is required to complete any task in class.

Mu has many strengths and life experiences that can be brought into the class. She has a small loom and could demonstrate how to weave for the class. She has a love of gardening and she developed gardening skills at the refugee camp where she lived for many years. She has a kind and friendly personality and is very warm and welcoming. She is a mother of three children and one attends the childminding services located at the school.

She enjoys being in class and wants to find a job soon. She sees English classes as a place to meet friends. She also values that her child is exposed to English in the childminding program.

In Mu's class, many learners have expressed interest in obtaining work at a local greenhouse that hires many new workers. Some of their peers have recently found jobs. The instructor has designed a lesson that is intended to support these low-level learners develop an understanding that print has purposes such as to instruct. The instructor will guide learners in developing this awareness through the use of songs, actions, and photographs that show how to plant seeds. Throughout this handbook, examples will be drawn from this context to illustrate how different aspects of the three instructional processes could be included with learners at a low-level of literacy. In the final section of this handbook, The Lesson Plans, Lesson Plan 1 presents a detailed lesson plan on this topic for Mu's class.



(Liévano, 2014)

Andres is from Colombia. He grew up on a farm and his parents were unable to pay for his schooling. Andres grew up with some print around him, but has he never attended school. In addition, he was born to non-literate parents, so Andres never developed basic literacy skills in

Spanish at home. He is classified as a non-literate learner.

Andres has lived in Canada for a few years and lives with his wife, his adult daughter, and her two children. His wife has chronic pain and is unable to attend school. Andres attends class part-time as he needs to care for his wife, and he sometimes provides care for his two grandchildren. His daughter has started working at a college cafeteria and her work schedule changes weekly. He often has to pick up his grandchildren from school or drop them off in the mornings.

Andres knows the letters of the alphabet and is developing an awareness of letter-sound correspondence. Like Mu, he has no metalinguistic awareness in his first language, but he is developing the awareness that spoken language is comprised of smaller words that are comprised of sounds and letters. His class is beginning to look at letter-sound cues and context for guessing words that are already in their oral vocabulary.

As Andres has been in class for about a year, he understands that reading and writing in English moves from left-to-right and top-to-bottom. He is able to pick up a book such as a picture dictionary and knows how to orient it and flip through the pages.

As Andres grew up in a literate society, he came across print and visuals at various points in his life and knew that print held meaning – meaning that he was unable to access. He saw various images on billboards, signs, and newspapers during the times he left the farm for visits into the nearby town. However, as he had limited exposure to different kinds of images, he did not always understand what he saw and sometimes got confused when images were very stylized or symbolic. Instruction for him needs to include how to interpret symbolic elements.

Andres is not yet a fluent reader as he is still developing decoding and comprehension skills. However, he is dedicated to his education and practises reading memorized sentences out loud to his wife when he is at home. He would benefit from practice in identifying words as separate entities (e.g., placing familiar words on word cards and reading them and sequencing them into sentences).

Like Mu, Andres also has experience with planning tasks. As a farmer, he started his morning with a list of tasks that he needed to accomplish that day. He also plans what bus to take, and is aware that he needs to take the bus at a different

time when he picks up his grandchildren and from a different location when he drops them off at school in the morning. However, these planning skills do not transfer easily into the context for learning, and he has not yet become aware of the concept of setting a purpose for reading or monitoring comprehension while reading.

Andres has many home responsibilities and strengths. He has a strong work ethic and likes routine. He prefers working with his hands, being outside, and going on field trips. He benefits from hands-on, kinesthetic learning opportunities. He is a motivated learner and views attending ESL classes as an opportunity to improve himself and bring literacy into his house by reading with his grandchildren. One of his goals is to help his grandchildren with their homework.

In Andres' class, many learners are caregivers to elementary school children. Some learners have brought in their children's monthly school calendars and asked questions about them. The instructor noticed that the days of the calendar indicate a school subject/event that requires caregivers to send their children to school with a certain item (e.g., pack books for library, pack sneakers for gym, pack money for pizza day). The instructor has designed a lesson that is intended to support learners to develop a strategy for guessing unknown words by using letter-sound cues, thinking about the context, and thinking about orally known words within this context. The instructor guides learners to develop this skill by activating background knowledge, developing new oral vocabulary, applying the strategy to collaborative activities such as a "find someone who" activity, and reading short stories and simplified school calendars. The final real-life task is to have learners read a calendar and physically pack the correct item in a backpack. Throughout this handbook, examples will be drawn from this context to illustrate how different aspects of the instructional processes could be included with learners at a low-to-mid-level of literacy. In the final section of this handbook, The Lesson Plans, Lesson Plan 2 presents a detailed lesson plan on this topic for Andres's class.



(Nijssen, 2013)

Adama is from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She has lived in Canada for almost three years and has attended ESL classes since her arrival. She is a single mother with four children. Adama is a semi-

literate learner as as she attended primary school in the

Ugandan refugee camp where she lived for many years. She speaks Kiswahili and is able to speak a little French. She has worked only in the home.

Adama is beginning to read and she has developed a good understanding of letter-sound correspondence and some decoding skills. Her reading fluency is improving as she is increasing her sight word repertoire on a weekly basis. She successfully uses a few reading strategies such as activating background knowledge before reading a text and referring to a picture dictionary to find unknown words. Adama uses left-to-right **directionality** when reading and scanning.

Adama has developed some metalinguistic knowledge while in ESL classes in Canada. She uses and understands the simple and progressive tenses as well as basic sentence patterns. She is beginning to use metalinguistic language (i.e., noun, verb, object) when talking about sentence structure, and these discussions are generally within whole class or small group practice environments.

Adama also is fairly competent in drawing meaning from pictures and is beginning to notice symbolic elements in images outside of the class. She can generally use images to predict content within the text with minimal support.

Adama is very motivated to gain literacy and English skills, as she wants to attend college to become a personal support worker.

In Adama's class, many learners are intending to go college. To begin developing academic skills and strategies for these learners, the instructor decides to build on their strategy of activating background knowledge before reading and teach learners how to set a purpose for reading. To develop this strategy, the instructor models by using a think-aloud how to set purposes for reading, and how to read to find answers to questions. Learners practise this strategy in groups and reflect on their use of the steps and why it is important to use this strategy when reading. The final real-life task is to share learning with peers as many higher education courses encourage this kind of dialogue in class. Throughout this handbook, examples are drawn from this context to illustrate how different aspects of the instructional processes could be included with learners at a high-level of literacy. In the final section of this handbook, The Lesson Plans, Lesson Plan 3 presents a detailed lesson plan on this topic for Adama's class.

After-Reading Questions

What stood out for you in this chapter?

What are some challenges that you have observed in your learners' reading skill and strategy development?

Section Two:

The Instructional Processes

Chapter 2: Interactive Instructional Approach

Pre-Reading Questions

How do you usually structure a reading lesson? What activities do you include before reading, during reading, and after reading?

What is it?

Trends in reading instruction have swung between top-down/meaning-based and bottom-up/skills-based approaches over several decades due to a variety of social, political, and practical reasons (Birch, 2015; NRP, 2000; Pressley, 2006). **Top-down approaches** involve holistic, meaning-based interactions with text in which learners are immersed in authentic, real-life tasks and print experiences. In these print-rich learning environments, there are many opportunities to read predictable and enjoyable materials so learners are motivated to read and find patterns, and to write using invented spelling so learners can explore letter sound connections while expressing their ideas while immersed in real-life writing tasks (Pressley, 2006). Examples of top-down activities and practices include activating schemata (i.e., prior experience, knowledge, feelings), making guesses about unknown words by using context clues, choral reading, daily reading, teacher modelling, the language experience approach (LEA) and total physical response (TPR) (Bell, 2013, Pressley, 2006).

Bottom-up approaches involve explicit, skills-based instruction that moves along a linear and sequential series of reading skills. Instruction may focus first on developing awareness of the sounds of English, then focus on phonics, on words, and finally on sentences (Birch, 2015). Essentially, the focus is on skill development before development of meaning as there is little emphasis on connecting the text to background knowledge (Grabe & Stoller, 2013). One example of a bottom-up approach in reading includes using worksheets to teach phonics.

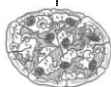
While trends have swung back and forth between these approaches, several literacy experts (Bell, 2013; Birch, 2015; Knowles, Holten, & Swanson, 2012; Montero, Newmaster, & Ledger, 2014; Pressley, 2006; Vinogradov & Bigelow, 2010; Vinogradov, 2010) suggest that an either/or approach to teaching literacy skills and strategies results in an incomplete model. Essentially, top-down approaches lack

explicit instruction in the skills (e.g., understanding letter-sound relationships) required for good reading, and bottom-up approaches lack contextualized, real-life tasks and immersion in literacy. These experts suggest that effective literacy instruction should combine both top-down and bottom-up instructional approaches in what is termed a **balanced literacy approach** (Pressley, 2006). In balanced literacy instruction, instruction may start with top-down approaches and then move to bottom-up approaches or vice versa, but both approaches are included.

The **interactive instructional approach**, or **whole-part-whole approach**, is an example of a balanced literacy model that combines both top-down/meaning-based and bottom-up/skills-based approaches into a specific sequence (e.g., CCLB, 2014; Vinogradov, 2010). Essentially, the whole-part-whole instructional approach moves from an authentic task in its entirety, to focused instruction on the building of skills and strategies, and then returns to a whole authentic task again. Knowles, Holten and Swanson (2012) assert that there is a natural whole-part-whole rhythm to learning, so that designing instruction based on this approach is ideal.

How do we use it?

The interactive, or whole-part-whole, instructional approach consists of three steps: the first whole, the parts, and the second whole. The description of how to incorporate these steps provided below is compiled from the recommendations of several sources (i.e., CCLB, 2014; Knowles et al., 2012; Vinogradov & Bigelow, 2010).



First Whole:

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The **first whole** step begins with an authentic task in its entirety and ensures that learners are prepared for new instruction and are motivated to learn. This component contextualizes the new learning and activates background knowledge. It lays the groundwork for learners to retain information and to be able to recognize and recall it again during the second whole.

In this *First Whole* step, the instructor:

- ✓ States clear learning goals/objectives/purpose to the learners at the beginning of each lesson
- ✓ Directly connects the lesson to learners' experiences
- ✓ Uses meaningful and personally relevant contexts
- ✓ Activates learners' background knowledge
- ✓ Supports learners in developing new vocabulary

Examples in Context



(Peter, 2015)

For example, Mu's class is working towards building an awareness that print can be used for different purposes (i.e., to instruct). This lesson focuses on following instructions in the workplace as some of Mu's classmates

want to find jobs at the local greenhouse that often hires new workers. The purpose of the first whole of the lesson is to develop vocabulary for the final task of looking at print (i.e., photographs) to follow instructions.

This lesson plan begins with developing vocabulary for the materials using realia (e.g., pot, soil, seeds, watering can), identifying and naming the target vocabulary in a video, using actions to indicate the instructional steps, and putting the actions to a song. See Lesson Plan 1 for the detailed lesson plan.

Mu and many of her classmates want to work at a local greenhouse. These learners can develop basic job-related vocabulary using realia, oral repetition, songs, videos, and miming.



Part:

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The **part** step ensures that learners develop the bottom-up skills and strategies required for successfully completing contextualized, real-life tasks. This step consists of its own subset of whole-part-whole steps (e.g., modelling, breaking the

task down into steps, learners using the new skills in context), and focuses on explicit instruction and practice of specific skills-based (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics) or meaning-based (i.e., vocabulary, fluency, comprehension) reading components. Learners can be supported differently during the parts instruction based on their needs. Mastery of each part must be achieved for learner success in the second whole.

In this *Part* step, the instructor:

- ✓ Provides explicit skills and strategy instruction
- ✓ Models and scaffolds skill and strategy use based on learners' needs
- ✓ Differentiates instruction
- ✓ Provides learners with formative feedback about effort and strategy use (e.g., You did well because you did A, B, and C)

Examples in Context



(Nijssen, 2013)

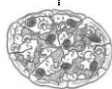
For example, Adama's class is working on setting purposes for reading about the digestive system. Learners started the lesson by using a familiar strategy of activating their background knowledge about the

digestive

system. In this lesson, the part which is a new comprehension strategy involves setting purposes for reading. First, the instructor contextualizes the concept of setting a purpose by connecting it to a real-life situation of going to the doctor. Learners are asked to brainstorm different reasons for going to the doctor. At this point of the lesson, the instructor provides

Literacy learners require explicit instruction in their skill and strategy development. The declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge offered in a think-aloud can serve as the basis for scaffolding and differentiating instruction and providing formative feedback.

declarative knowledge about setting purposes in this context (e.g., we think about what we want to know from the doctor, we make a list, we stay focused on our list while there). Then, the instructor suggests that like setting a purpose before going to the doctor, readers can set a purpose before reading. Next the instructor models how to set a purpose for reading by doing a think-aloud that includes procedural knowledge (e.g., think about what you already know, think about what you would like to learn). Learners are asked to follow this procedure in their groups, and the instructor circulates to provide guidance and feedback that redirects, supports, and extends learners' understanding. See Lesson Plan 3 for the complete lesson.



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Second Whole:

The **second whole** step ensures that learners are guided in bringing the parts back together into meaningful whole, thereby strengthening and contextualizing the parts into meaningful practice. Active learning and repetitive practice assists learners in transferring the parts from their working memory to their long-term memory (Knowles et al., 2012). This transfer leads to automatic use of the parts providing more cognitive space for higher-level skills of comprehension and application to real-life tasks.

In this *Second Whole* step, the instructor:

- ✓ Links the parts back together to create a new whole
- ✓ Provides repetitive practice
- ✓ Contextualizes the skill and strategy use in real-life activities/tasks

Examples in Context



(Liévano, 2014)

For example, in Andres' class, they are working on reading a child's monthly school calendar to determine which items caregivers need to pack for their children each day (e.g., pack markers for art class, sneakers for

gym). The learners have experience with reading a calendar, so these skills were spiralled into this new context. The lesson plan begins with a discussion about some of the things that children need to bring to school every day or some days by using familiar, real items to guide the discussion. Vocabulary is developed through the use of realistic images of the school subjects/events and oral repetition of sentences and using manipulatives to complete sentences. The part aspect of the lesson focuses on developing the letter-sound cue strategy that includes using the initial sound to guess the written word using knowledge of letter-sound correspondence, thinking of oral vocabulary, and the context. The second whole of this lesson allows learners the opportunity to pull together the skills (e.g., reading a calendar, making informed guesses about a word based on the initial consonant and context) to read a school calendar and physically pack a backpack with the correct item.

During Reading Questions

Do you think this approach might be useful to your learners? Why or why not?

Why is it important for ESL adult literacy learners?

The interactive instructional approach can be used to plan programs, units, and/or daily lessons. This approach provides a complete model of reading development that includes both contextualized real-life authentic practice and letter and word recognition skill development which can benefit ESL adult literacy learners. The lesson flow from whole to part to whole supports different kinds of learners in being able to break down tasks into smaller pieces and bring the pieces together again in a new way. Some ESL adult literacy learners may feel overwhelmed when working with a whole task, so demonstrating that any task can be broken down into smaller parts can make challenging tasks more manageable: “[The interactive instructional approach] reinforces the concept that every task ... is really just a series of small steps that can be learned and applied. The same small steps can often be used to accomplish different types of tasks” (CCLB, 2014, p. 47).

The lesson flow from whole to part to whole supports different kinds of learners in being able to break down tasks into smaller pieces and bring the pieces together again in a new way.

ESL literacy learners who were taught using the interactive instructional approach were found to improve in their reading performance and confidence. For example, Trupke-Bastidas and Poulos (2007) found that using a whole-part-whole instructional model with a focus on phonemic awareness and decoding increased reading performance in 8-out-of-9 part-time ESL and ESL adult literacy learners. ESL adult literacy learners who demonstrated strong oral skills and a willingness to communicate demonstrated the strongest gains in the areas of identifying initial letter sound, same sound, blending sounds, rhyming, and decoding clusters and short vowels. In addition, Montero, Newmaster and Ledger (2014) found that using a whole-part-whole approach with high school ESL literacy students led to a demonstrated increase in learner confidence, and

learners gained an average of 8.3 reading levels (previous non-intervention students gained an average of 1.2 reading levels over the same amount of time).

By using a balanced literacy approach such as the interactive instructional approach, ESL adult literacy learners can be supported in their understanding of that print has meaning and of print concepts. In addition, the approach supports literacy use in real-life contexts, and the development of cognitive and metacognitive skills and strategies that are the building blocks of literacy. The combination of these approaches can lead learners to engage in meaningful and relevant activities and tasks that facilitate the use of literacy in learners' lives beyond the classroom (CCLB, 2015).

After Reading Questions

How might you adapt an upcoming reading lesson to incorporate each of the three steps of the interactive instructional approach?

Chapter 3: Differentiated Instruction

Pre-reading Questions

Do you think it is important to adapt your instruction (e.g., materials, activities, assessments, etc.) to meet the needs of all the learners? Why or why not?

What are some ways you have adapted your instruction (e.g., materials, activities, assessments, etc.)?

Introduction

During my last teaching year, I taught a CLB 2, 3, 4 class in the morning, and a CLB 3, 4, 5 class in the afternoon. The learners in my class ranged in ability from benchmarks 1-7, and about 30% of these learners had gaps in their literacy education. From talking to colleagues at conferences, I understand that this range of learners was typical in many classes across Ontario. Although governmental recommendations (CCLB, 2012; Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2013; Hutt & Young, 1997; Johansson et al., 2001) for ESL adult literacy learner placement is to situate these learners in designated literacy classes for the duration of their literacy skill development (i.e., to the end of CLB 4L), decisions about class levels are made by administrators and typically are based on enrollment numbers. As instructors, we must create the best learning situations possible for all our students following these placement decisions.

The diversity of our ESL and LINC classes reminds me of one-room schoolhouses in which learners of all skill levels (e.g., grades) and all ages sat in the same class. Assumedly, one-room schoolhouse teachers were adept at providing meaningful class time and appropriately levelled and challenging skill-building and skill-using opportunities to learners. This may have included grouping learners into levels for reading activities, having higher level learners support lower level learners, or the teacher providing explicit instruction to small groups while other students worked collaboratively or independently. Like one-room schoolhouse teachers, meeting the unique needs of our learners on a regular basis may be something that we strive to do as well. It is possible to make small adaptations to lesson plans, materials, activities, assessments, and the general feel of the classroom to acknowledge, celebrate, and support

It is possible to make small adaptations to lesson plans, materials, activities, assessments, and the general feel of the classroom to acknowledge, celebrate, and support learners' needs at various times.

learners' needs at various times. Think of your learners, think of what you are teaching them, and think of what parts of the classroom and curriculum you have the freedom to adapt and modify.

In this section, I define differentiated instruction and explain its principles. I provide an overview of learners' needs in general, and how to adapt classroom materials, activities, assessment, and environment according to this approach. I conclude by explaining what some researchers have found to be beneficial about the provision of differentiated instruction – namely that it can improve reading performance, allow disadvantaged learners to catch-up to the literacy skills of their more advantaged peers (Connor et al., 2011; Ford, Cabell, Konold, Invernizzi, & Gartland, 2013; Reis, McCoach, Little, Muller, & Kaniskan, 2011; Solari, Petscher & Folsom, 2014), and provide students with more opportunities to be engaged with level-appropriate literacy practices (Reis et al., 2011). I also include examples of differentiated instruction based on the composite learners Mu, Andres, and Adama.

What is it?

Differentiation (Tomlinson, 2014) is an approach to teaching and learning that is grounded in a growth mindset approach that recognizes, values, and supports learner differences within a class. A **mindset** is the set of assumptions, expectations, and beliefs that guide our behaviour and interactions with others (Tomlinson, 2014). Dweck (2006) has defined two mindsets: growth and fixed mindsets. Individuals who have a growth mindset believe that anyone can learn anything if they are persistent and determined and are given support from someone who is persistent and determined (Dweck, 2006). In contrast, individuals who have a fixed mindset believe that people are born smart, or are born not smart, that people have genetic predispositions to be good at certain things like math or languages or sports (Dweck, 2006). In a class that provides differentiated instruction, instructors typically have a growth mindset and they

can provide opportunities for learners to consider their own mindsets.

Principles

There are five principles of differentiation. These principles include the use of respectful tasks, quality curriculum, flexible management, continual assessment, and community (Tomlinson, 2014). The use of **respectful tasks** means that although learners may be working on different tasks or degrees of challenge, all the tasks are equally engaging and appropriate for the learners (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). The *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) recognizes that ESL and ESL adult literacy learners are working to achieve the same language goals, but that ESL adult literacy learners require additional supports for their literacy development. In this sense, the use of respectful tasks recognizes that learners are all working towards similar outcomes (e.g., achieving language goals), and instructors can select content, activities, and authentic, real-life tasks designed for adults, and that are appropriately challenging based on learners' language and literacy needs. Occasionally, as ESL adult literacy instructors, we may select ready-made handouts that were intentionally designed for children, but it is important to remove any childish images (e.g., cartoon characters) and to adapt content to reflect issues that are relevant to adult learners. (For a list of benefits, challenges, and tips for using children's material with ESL adult literacy learners, see Bow Valley College's link: <https://esl-literacy.com/essentials-life/classroom-strategies/materials-esl-literacy-classroom/children%E2%80%99s-literacy-materials>).

The five principles of differentiation include the use of respectful tasks, quality curriculum, flexible management, continual assessment, and community (Tomlinson, 2014).

The second principle of differentiation is **quality curriculum**. Quality curriculum includes the development and selection of outcomes, lesson

objectives, and themes or topics based on learners' needs, abilities, interests, and ways of learning. Recommendations for designing modules in LINC programs include planning with the end in mind (i.e., backward design) (Richards, 2013). Backward design includes three steps: identify desired results, determine acceptable evidence of learning, and plan learning experiences and instruction (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006).

Instructors start planning (e.g., terms, modules, daily lesson plans) by identifying the needs, abilities, and interest of the learners. Many LINC instructors regularly consult with their learners to determine areas of interest for themes, topics, and skill-development. Needs assessments can be conducted in a variety of ways including class surveys, skills assessments, or dialogue journals. From this point, instructors can select the desired result or end goal that learners would work to achieve by the end of the module (e.g., to be able to change a doctor's appointment). Ideally the end goal represents, to the greatest extent possible, a real-life event (e.g., the second whole of the whole-part-whole instructional approach). Once instructors determine the end goal, they need to determine acceptable evidence of learning such as real or simulated skill-using, authentic tasks (e.g., a role-play between a patient and a receptionist for changing an appointment, responding to an appointment confirmation email).

Finally, instructors plan skill-building experiences (e.g., practising polite requests, listening for questions, rehearsing how to spell one's name and address, understanding the format of a business email). In addition, instructors also need to plan lessons that move learners forward from their current language and literacy skills and strategies to being able to achieve the desired end results independently by the end of the module. LINC instructors can draw on the continua in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) to inform the progression of literacy skills, the parts of the whole-part-whole instructional approach, and the skill-building tasks to develop quality curriculum.

While there are several ways of designing learning opportunities based on learners' needs, abilities, interests, and ways of learning, the principle of quality curriculum reflects the importance of using authentic, meaning-based learning opportunities as a way to relate learning to learners' lives. Incorporating these considerations into planning and curriculum design can increase learners' motivation and engagement with the content (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011).

The third principle of differentiation is **flexible management**. Flexible management involves grouping learners in a variety of ways. Sometimes the instructor may choose groups, students may choose groups, or groups may be selected randomly. Groups could be selected according to abilities or readiness, interests, or the ways learners like to learn (e.g., with others, visually, kinaesthetically). Flexible grouping enables teachers to target students' learning needs and observe learners in a variety of contexts (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011).

The fourth principle of differentiation is **continual assessment**. Continual assessment includes needs assessments and assessment for learning. Needs assessments can be used to determine learner readiness, interest, and preferred ways of learning. When teachers have this information, they can match the needs and interests of learners and identify any gaps that they may have. Needs assessments can include surveys, reading samples, interest inventories, and/or learning preferences checklists (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011).

Formative assessments inform teachers about how to adapt lesson plans and alter student groupings based on learner performance as they progress through the module (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). As such, assessments should be central to classroom practices, benefit the students, and reflect the curricular adaptations that were designed to meet the needs and goals of the learners. Formative assessments should inform teaching and enhance learning (Pettis, 2014). Formative assessments can include observations, exit cards (e.g., instructor poses

a question at the end of class, and learners answer it on a cue card or verbally as they leave the room), student indicators (e.g., thumbs-up, thumbs-down, thumbs-sideways), journal entries, and student reflections (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). (Also see the Guided Instruction subsection in Chapter 4 for more ideas).

The final principle of differentiation is **building community**. Individuals have needs for acceptance, affiliation, contribution, challenge, and support (Tomlinson, 2014). Instructors can design their class environments to meet these needs. Some ways to do this are to make intentional connections to every learner and for learners to compete against themselves and not against each other (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). For example, self-competition is encouraged within LINC programs as part of the Portfolio-Based Language Assessment (**PBLA**) when learners complete self-assessments and set goals (Pettis, 2014). Generally, when learners feel safe and accepted in a class, their stress or anxiety may be reduced. As powerful emotions such as stress and anxiety can hijack the brain and prevent learning, designing a safe environment and building community can encourage the retention of new concepts, skills, and strategies (Hardiman, 2010; Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011).

Differentiating Instruction Based on Learners' Needs

Instructors can provide differentiated instruction according to the needs of their learners. In differentiated instruction, these needs include learners' readiness, interests, and learning profiles.

Readiness

Learner **readiness** consists of a complex set of factors that affect the level of difficulty at which students are ready to learn and the rate at which they grow (Tomlinson, 2014). One factor of readiness includes learners' actual developmental level and their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Learners' **actual developmental level** represents what learners are able to do

independently. In LINC, we may determine learners' actual developmental level when we do summative assessments (e.g., an assessment at the end of a unit) or diagnostic assessments prior to instruction. In addition, learners' CLB levels represent what learners have achieved independently. Learners' **zone of proximal development** represents what learners are able to do with support from a more knowledgeable other (e.g., peer, instructor). This zone represents learner potential: this is where learning occurs and where instruction should take place.

It is important to remember that even though learners may be assessed at the same actual developmental level (e.g., the same CLB levels), their readiness levels, or their zones of proximal development, may be quite different. No two learners are the same. ESL learners in general are unique in terms of their identity, stage of acculturation, feelings toward home culture versus school culture, prior language and literacy education, home responsibilities, degree of exposure to English outside of school, and cultural competence (e.g., pragmatic knowledge, register, cultural conventions) (Dahlman, Hoffman, & Brauhn, 2008). In addition, learners' readiness can be affected by prior learning experiences including formal education, exposure to a topic (e.g., background knowledge/concepts), and availability of skills to transfer from the first to subsequent language. ESL adult literacy learners have gaps in their prior education, and lack many skills, strategies, and concepts that their literate peers may easily be able to transfer.

Even though learners may have completed the same benchmarks, their readiness levels, or their zones of proximal development, may be quite different. No two learners are the same.

Other factors that affect learner readiness include the safety and health needs of learners. Readiness can be affected if basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, safety) are not met at school or at home. Learning can also be affected by health including

physical and emotional factors such as chronic pain or depression. We know from studies on the brain that when learners experience stress and anxiety, their ability to retain information and new learning is lessened (Hardiman, 2009; Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). When tasks and assignments are beyond learners' zones of proximal development, this may cause stress and anxiety. By systematically and intentionally developing awareness of learners' readiness levels, instructors can design modules and adapt lessons according to where learners currently are working and what cognitively lies just beyond their current readiness level.

Ways to determine learners' readiness. Instructors can do the following:

- Administer Can-do assessments (e.g., http://www.language.ca/index.cfm?Voir=sections&Id=17369&M=4038&Repertoire_No=2137991327).
- Administer the *Canadian Language Benchmarks Literacy Placement Tool. Volume 1: Foundation and Phase I* (CCLB, 2005) and *Volume 2: Phase 2* (CCLB, 2006).
- Create and administer an instructor-developed pre-test for skills or content knowledge.
- Provide learners with confidence scales (e.g., learners rank themselves about how confident they feel about certain skills or topic areas).
- Provide learners with entry cards or exit cards (questions they have about the topic before a lesson and at the end of a lesson).
- Use teacher observation/checklists (e.g., look for evidence that learners are at a frustration point and cannot proceed, if they are looking to peers for support, if they can do the task quickly and independently).
- Design lessons using the KWL chart which is a three column chart: K: What do I know about the topic; W: What do I want to know about the topic; L: What did I learn about the topic? This can be used before and after a reading, a listening activity such as a presentation, a recording, or a movie.
- Request learners write a one-minute paper (e.g., at the end of class

students take one minute to respond to questions such as “What did you learn today? Outstanding questions? Things you don’t understand well enough to ask about? Other comments?”).

This list is compiled from my own experiences as well as the works of Dahlman et al. (2008), Pettis (2014), Sousa and Tomlinson (2011), and Tomlinson (2014)

Strategies to use once you have determined readiness. Instructors can do the following:

- Consider what parts of the module can include flexible grouping (e.g., grouping learners by levels to read texts of varying complexity).
- Consider how you may be able to offer explicit instruction to individuals or small groups when learners are working collaboratively or independently.
- Consider how to provide additional supports and to extend learning based on learners’ skills, conceptual and background knowledge.
- Monitor students’ learning continually, offer ongoing feedback, and adjust lesson plans and groupings as learners demonstrate their new understanding and abilities.
- Seek feedback from learners through self-assessments and self-reflections to understand how they feel about what and how they are studying so that modifications can be made.

This list is compiled from my own experiences as well as the works of Dahlman et al. (2008), Sousa and Tomlinson (2011), and Tomlinson (2014).

Interest

Interest refers to a feeling or emotion that causes individuals to focus on or attend to something because it matters to them (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). When teachers tap into learners’ interests, this can hold learners’ attention, encourage engagement with the content, increase motivation, increase achievement, and contribute to a sense of accomplishment (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). Incorporating learners’ interests into lesson design and assessments

promotes a positive learning environment as learners see that their interests and experiences have value (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011).

Assessing learners' interests helps instructors match instruction with content. For example, if learners express interest in food and cooking, instructors could design lessons around healthy eating, nutrients, reading flyers, or using coupons. If learners express preferred types of learning activities, instructors could build these preferences into class time such as time to read quietly, time to work with a partner, or time to play games (Dahlman et al., 2008). Furthermore, when instructors are able to combine learners' interest and readiness levels, learners may be able to work at slightly higher levels because they may have the interest, motivation, vocabulary, and background knowledge about the topic (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). Although we cannot incorporate all learners' interests all the time, we can endeavour to include some areas of interest some of the time (e.g., include the interests of the majority or of reluctant learners in order to encourage their engagement).

One interest-based needs assessment technique that I have done is a **dotmocracy**. In this technique, the whole class brainstorms ideas, casts their vote by placing a dot or a sticker beside what they deem to be the most important for them over the next few weeks, and then we tally up the votes and make decisions about what content and skills to focus on for the next module. I have found this technique useful and inspiring as the learners come up with creative ideas. For example, one dotmocracy with my CLB 3, 4, 5 class with several literacy learners led to the learners researching a nutrient, preparing a PowerPoint presentation on the nutrient, what it does for the body, and what foods the nutrient can be found in. After identifying these needs, learners were motivated to build their reading, writing, speaking, and computer skills. Because of this high interest topic and skill development, learners eagerly worked through each step of the project.

Ways to determine learners' interests. Instructors can do the following:

- Conduct interests survey (e.g., on the theme/topic)
- Have learners complete peer interviews (e.g., likes/dislikes)
- Have learners brainstorm as a class or in groups (e.g., a dotmocracy)
- Have learners complete questionnaires
- Have learners write in journals (e.g., learners indicate interests privately)
- Have learners participate in discussions (small groups, whole class)
- Take notes on cues cards throughout the year when learners share things they are interested in and review the cards when planning modules and assessments.

This list is compiled from my own experiences as well as the works of Dahlman et al. (2008), Sousa and Tomlinson (2011), and Tomlinson (2014).

Strategies to use once you have determined interest. Instructors can do the following:

- Start with what learners know so that they are able to make connections and move from the familiar to the unfamiliar.
- Select materials and examples that are inclusive and representative of the multiple realities of language learners of different genders, ages, cultures, ethno-racial backgrounds, abilities, sexualities, and socio-economic status (St. Joseph Immigrant Women's Centre, 2006).
- Share personal narratives and experiences about the content to be a role model for having a wide array of interests outside the classroom.
- Provide extension activities based on learner interest.
- Organize groups according to interests.

This list is compiled from my own experiences as well as the works of Dahlman et al. (2008), Sousa and Tomlinson (2011), and Tomlinson (2014).

Learning Profile

Developing **learning profiles** can be useful to consider when building a classroom community that celebrates learner differences. Learning profile refers

to how students like to learn and/or how they learn best. Students' learning profiles are the combination of interests, dispositions, and modes in which they learn best (Tomlinson, 2014).

Learning style theory represents the idea that individuals learn differently and more effectively when the learning environment most closely matches their preferred approaches to learning. Learning styles are considered to be flexible, not fixed. Learning styles may be affected by affective preferences (e.g., personality factors), physical preferences (e.g., preferring bright versus dimmer environments, warmer versus cooler temperature, noisy versus quiet learning environments, to move versus remaining still while learning), and cognitive preferences (e.g., how individuals organize and process information, preferences for completing one task at a time or multitasking, for highly structured versus open-ended tasks, for whole-to-part and part-to whole approaches) (Dahlman et al., 2008; Pettis, 2014). In addition, learning style factors may also include preferences related to multiple intelligences (e.g., musical, verbal-linguistic, spatial, interpersonal), and to grouping (e.g., working alone, with a partner, in small or large groups) (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011).

In addition, learning profile can be influenced by culture and gender. Culture may influence learning preferences through socialization around expressing feelings versus remaining silent out of respect, valuing interdependence over independence or vice versa (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). Some examples of learning preferences based on gender include that males may be more attracted to competition whereas females may be more attracted to collaboration, and females may be more able to talk about their feelings than males (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). However, it is unwise to stereotype learners based on their culture and/or gender because their personalities, environments, and experiences may have led them to develop unconventional learning preferences. It is important that instructors recognize that learners learn in diverse ways, and that it is important to adapt ways of teaching to tap into different learning styles

throughout a module or a term.

Ways to determine learners' learning profiles. Instructors can do the following:

- Observe learners' preferences
- Have learners complete surveys
- Have learners complete journal entries on how they like to learn
- Conference with learners to find more about learners' preferences
- Have learners complete self-reflections on learning preferences

This list is compiled from my own experiences as well as the works of Dahlman et al. (2008), Sousa and Tomlinson (2011), and Tomlinson (2014).

Strategies to use once you have determined learning profiles. Choice boards provide instructions with a valuable tool once they have developed students' learning profiles. Choice boards are permanent wall pockets that contain different choices of activities for students. Choice boards could resemble a tic-tac-toe game (i.e., 3 x 3 cards) with the option of students selecting their own activities based on colour coding or attempting to complete activities in a row, column, or diagonal line. Variations in format and procedure are based on the needs of the learners. Choice boards could be utilized as a regular part of class time or as part of anchor activities. For low level learners sample tasks could include activities such as copy your name 5 times, write your address, cut pictures from a magazine based on the topic (e.g., red things, fruit, etc.), spell words using letter tiles, and read and copy sight word flashcards. All the work is done at the learner's desk not at the choice board itself (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011; Tomlinson, 2014).

How do we use it?

We know that learners are diverse in their readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. In order to change things in the classroom to meet the unique needs of our learners, we can adapt content (materials), process (activities), products (assessments), and/or the feeling of the classroom

(environment/affect). Instructors can select one or more ways to differentiate instruction, and these can overlap. Providing differentiated instruction can seem complex and overwhelming at first because there are so many factors and considerations. However, recommendations are to start with what you believe is easy to implement and manage (Dahlman et al., 2008; Tomlinson, 2014). Once you identify what is easy for you to implement, it may be helpful to repeat that technique across several modules until you become comfortable with it (Dahlman et al., 2008; Tomlinson, 2014). When you are ready, you can select a new technique, and again repeat it across several modules until you become comfortable with it. Repeating this cycle and building slowly over a few years, will allow you to develop a large repertoire of successful strategies.



Differentiating Content

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The **content** refers to what we want students to know, be able to do, and the texts and examples that make up the module or lesson (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). LINC instructors often refer to the *Canadian language benchmarks: English as a Second Language for Adults* (CIC, 2012) and the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) to determine outcomes associated with quality curriculum. For example, in my CLB 2, 3, 4 class, I differentiated instruction by having learners complete tasks at the correct language and literacy benchmarks rather than expecting all the learners to work at the same benchmark. I began with a central task and adapted materials and task expectations according to the conditions of learning and features of communication outlined in the two benchmark documents (i.e., CCLB, 2014; CIC, 2012). Instructors can also differentiate content by developing modules according to learners' interests, by changing the materials (e.g., modifying material for different levels), and/or providing extension materials for more advanced learners.

Questions

- ✓ What language skills and strategies do my learners need to develop? (e.g., refer to the *Canadian language benchmarks: English as a Second Language for Adults* [CIC, 2012])
- ✓ What literacy skills and strategies do my learners need to develop? (e.g., refer to the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* [CCLB, 2014]).
- ✓ What resources can I use to teach this material (e.g., internet, movies, stories, pictures, presentations)?
- ✓ Do the resources and examples match the interests and multiple realities of the learners?
- ✓ How can I adapt the material to meet the readiness, interests, and learning profiles of the learners?

Examples of differentiating content identified by Sousa and Tomlinson (2011) include:

By readiness. Instructors can do the following:

- Provide partially completed handouts (e.g., jigsaw, graphic organizers) so there is less of a cognitive load for completing the task.
- Adapt reading materials for varying readability levels (e.g., include an image beside a word for extra support, simplify the language).
- Meet with small groups to re-teach material to struggling learners or provide extension activities for more advanced learners.
- Use metaphors and examples from students' lives to make connections to new learning.
- Use visuals, video images, and audio to supplement text (e.g., visuals as part of the agenda such as a picture of a book for reading activities).
- Put text on tape (record the text for learners to be able to listen to it).
- Use reading buddies.
- Use demonstrations and hands-on activities to help learners connect the

abstract to the concrete.

- Provide learners with a summary of the main points before they read a text.
- Provide extension activities such as having a file of extra reading materials or bookmarking websites that provide more information on a subject.

By interest. Instructors can do the following:

- Allow learners to select readings based on their interests.
- Use language, examples, and applications that reflect the diversity of learners' culture and lifestyles.
- Use contemporary media as resources for teaching (e.g., blogs, social media, podcasts).
- Provide access to books, articles, websites, podcasts, blogs, on-line presentations that connect to learners' areas of interest.
- Provide free reading material on a wide range of topics.

By learning profile. Instructors can do the following:

- Reflect on the styles you typically employ while teaching. Consider how you might adopt different styles throughout the module.
- Reflect on how your gender and culture may shape your teaching styles and consider how your perspectives may be similar or different to those of your learners.
- Provide a variety of modes of learning throughout the module (e.g., visual supports, auditory supports, demonstrations, small-group discussions).
- Include whole-to-part and part-to-whole instruction.



Differentiating Process

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The **process** refers to the activities we use and how students apply their skills and knowledge. Activities in this sense refer to the time in class when learners

try out the ideas, connect ideas to what they already know, and apply them to new settings (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). These activities are typically provided during guided instruction or scaffolding, collaborative learning opportunities (e.g., group work), and independent learning.

Questions

- ✓ How can learners apply their skills to real-life contexts?
- ✓ What skill-building activities will support learners in completing the task independently?
- ✓ How much modelling and scaffolding do students need?
- ✓ How can I incorporate collaborative tasks into this lesson or module?

Examples of differentiating process identified by Sousa and Tomlinson (2011) include:

By readiness. Instructors can do the following:

- Increase or decrease the complexity of the task while aiming for the same desired outcomes (e.g., when practising fluent reading, text length and complexity can differ for higher or lower level learners, but all learners are expected to read their passage fluently).
- Increase or decrease the number of variables in the task (e.g., if the task is matching upper and lower case letters, some learners match 5 sets of letters while others match 10 sets of letters).
- Some learners can work independently while others work collaboratively and others have teacher-support.
- Provide manipulatives for students who need them.
- Provide models, examples, and/or scaffolding to make a task more accessible.
- Break down tasks into small manageable and clear steps.
- Increase or decrease the number of practice opportunities based on learners' needs.

- Vary the amount of time provided for learners to complete tasks.
- Provide extension activities to advanced learners.

By interest. Instructors can do the following:

- Provide opportunities for learners to use skills in interest-based contexts (e.g., have learners teach the class something they know how to do).
- Use jigsaw groups that allow students to become experts in a topic that interests them.
- Provide role-play opportunities that address problems or issues that are relevant to learners.

By learning profile. Instructors can do the following:

- Provide learners with a choice of how to work (e.g., alone, with a partner, small groups, or with the teacher).
- Monitor your patterns for calling on students, and make an effort to call on all students consistently.
- Include both collaborative and competitive tasks in each module, and allow students to select one when appropriate.
- Provide spaces in your classroom that students can go to if they need a quiet space or background noise.



Differentiating Product

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The **product** represents ways that learners demonstrate what they know, understand, and can do at the end of a module (Tomlinson, 2014). Ideally, this will be as close to an authentic, real-world task as possible (e.g., selecting an appropriate greeting card, finding the total on a bill, following instructions to build furniture). Product connects to the final whole of the interactive instructional approach as learners demonstrate how they transfer and apply newly acquired skills and strategies.

Questions

- ✓ Did I provide enough modelling and scaffolding for students to be successful in demonstrating their skill in a new context?
- ✓ Are my assessments and assessment tools an appropriate measure for what my students have practised and studied?
- ✓ What are alternate ways learners can demonstrate their understanding of the task?

Examples of differentiating product identified by Sousa and Tomlinson, (2011) include:

By readiness. Instructors can do the following:

- Provide more- or less-complex materials for students based on their reading levels (e.g., CLB and literacy CLB).
- If the process leading up to the demonstration (e.g., poster presentation) is lengthy, provide learners with opportunities to check-in with the teacher.
- Provide models of sample tasks that represent different readiness level.

By interest. Instructors can do the following:

- Include learners' interests when designing assessment tasks (e.g., select a variety of readings on different topics, and learners select the article that interest them most).
- Encourage the use of contemporary media to demonstrate learning (e.g., blogs, photo projects).

By learning profile. Instructors can do the following:

- Encourage students to create their own product assignments as long as the product contains all the required criteria.
- Give learners options of how to demonstrate their understanding (e.g., do a poster presentation, do a role-play, write a paragraph).
- Provide models of products that represent different learning styles.
- Be flexible with time parameters when possible for learners who may

need more time to complete the work.

- Vary the types of questions asked (e.g., analytical, practical, creative).
- Provide choice in working alone or in small group when working on their products.

Differentiating Environment

Creating a safe learning **environment** is a key factor in promoting the retention of new learning (Hardiman, 2010; Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). An ideal learning environment includes learners assuming ownership over their education, teachers reinforcing students' strengths, teacher encouragement of student risk-taking with promotion of coping strategies (e.g., deep breaths before doing a presentation), and an empathetic teacher with a growth mindset (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). The learning environment also extends beyond the classroom into the school in ways that include policies around violence and discrimination, and things such as the provision of snacks for individuals who may be hungry (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). In addition, it can be beneficial to all learners when instructors incorporate examples, language, and materials that are inclusive and representative of the multiple realities of language learners of different genders, ages, cultures, ethno-racial backgrounds, abilities, sexualities, and socio-economic status (St. Joseph Immigrant Women's Centre, 2006).

It is also important to allow learners the space to exercise their learning profiles. For example, I had a learner who needed to stand up and walk around while she processed new information. I had noticed her leaving the class during activities, I spoke to her about it, and she informed me that she needed to move around to think. I told her that she could do that in class. I asked if I could tell the other learners and she said yes. I informed the class that this student sometimes needed to get up and walk around, and that this was fine. This was how she learned. The class easily accepted this as part of a safe environment.

Questions

- ✓ Are you aware of the basic needs of your learners including hunger, sleep deprivation, chronic pain, stress, anxiety, or safety issues outside of school?
- ✓ How do you model respecting others and valuing inclusivity and diversity within your classroom?
- ✓ Do you greet and connect with each student every day?
- ✓ Do you model and encourage active listening and provide opportunities for all learners to share during class?
- ✓ How do you celebrate learner successes?

Examples of differentiating environment identified by Sousa and Tomlinson, (2011) include:

By readiness. Instructors can do the following:

- Provide healthy snacks and beverages for all learners during break time.
- Create a list of ground rules for or with the class that all learners and instructional staff must follow.
- Develop classroom routines that allow students to access independent work if they finish early.

By interest. Instructors can do the following:

- Provide materials that reflect a variety of cultures and home settings (e.g., cultures, gender roles, sexual orientation, marital status, types of families).

By learning profile. Instructors can do the following:

- Provide spaces in the classroom that can be used for quiet study or noisy collaboration.

Examples in Context



(Peter, 2015)

Students in Mu's class are learning to use print to follow instructions. Differentiated instruction with this group of learners can reflect their interests and learning styles. For example, the activities in Lesson Plan 1 (see Section 3) tap into kinesthetic, musical, and visual learning modalities and include both whole class and collaborative groupings.

Many learners benefit from kinesthetic, musical, and visual learning modalities in whole class and collaborative groupings.



(Liévano, 2014)

In Andres' class, learners are making informed guesses about new words using letter-sound cues, context, and oral vocabulary. At the point in Lesson Plan 2 (see Section 3) where learners read a short narrative that uses the target vocabulary, learners are provided a choice in how they practice reading. Learners may elect to read quietly alone, with a partner, with the teacher, or in a small group.

Learners may elect to read quietly alone, with a partner, with the teacher, or in a small group.

Learners choose review activities from a choice board. Activities are connected to the topic and can represent different learning profiles.

This represents differentiating process according to learning profile. While the instructor assesses learners at the end of the lesson, the remainder of the class selects tasks from a choice board connected to the

content studied. Choices include completing a word search for the target vocabulary, cutting out school items from flyers that match a master list, filling the blanks in a story, and practising a spelling strategy for unfamiliar vocabulary. This represents differentiating process according to learning profile because learners are free to choose what activities to do according to their preferences.



(Nijssen, 2013)

Students in Adama's class are beginning to develop the comprehension strategy of setting a purpose for reading. In Lesson 3 (see Section 3), the instructor provides

learners with a choice of what

Learners choose what aspect of the topic they would like to study as an expression of their interest.

part of the digestive system they would like to study. This represents differentiation of content by interest. The information in the texts is different but the text is written at the same CLB level. Once groups become experts in some the part of the digestive system, they participate in a jigsaw activity in which learners form new groups to share information about their topic. At the end of the jigsaw activity, all the learners have all the key information about each topic (i.e., parts of the digestive system).

During Reading Questions

What differentiated instructional strategies have you tried in your reading classes? How effective were they? How do you know?

Why is it important for ESL adult literacy learners?

All of the components of differentiated instruction are interdependent and encourage an inviting classroom in which learners are able to learn according to their needs, interests, and preferred ways of learning. This type of learning

environment, infused with a growth mindset, has the potential to lessen classroom anxiety and promote learning (Hardiman, 2010; Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011).

There is a gap in the research literature on the use of and the impact of using differentiated instruction with ESL adult literacy learners. I think for many ESL adult literacy instructions, the principles and techniques for using differentiated instruction make sense, and some instructors may have noticed positive results with their learners after implementing one or more of the strategies. Some studies have found that providing differentiated reading instruction improves performance and helps disadvantaged children catch up to their more literate first language and English-speaking peers (Connor et al., 2011; Ford, Cabell, Konold, Invernizzi, & Gartland, 2013; Reis, McCoach, Little, Muller, & Kaniskan, 2011; Solari, Petscher & Folsom, 2014). These studies describe the reality that any class is really multi-level, and that all learners need to be supported in developing both their language proficiency *and* their literacy skill development. When learners are not supported in these areas, future literacy milestones may not be met (Ford et al., 2013), and these learners will likely continue to fall behind (Connor et al, 2011; Solari, 2014). It is possible to consider that some of these effects noticed with children have the potential to apply to ESL adult literacy learners as well. ESL adult literacy learners who are not supported in developing their literacy skills through differentiated instruction may fall behind in a similar way as the young learners in these studies. More research in this area needs to be conducted to more fully understand the impact, benefits, and challenges of using differentiated instruction in an ESL adult literacy class.

After Reading Questions

Think about your next reading class and how you could differentiate instruction. List 3 strategies you could try.

Chapter 4: The Gradual Release of Responsibility Framework

Pre-reading Questions

How do you transition from showing your learners how to do a reading task to having learners do the task independently? What supports might you provide them?

Introduction

The **gradual release of responsibility** is a framework in which the cognitive load for completing a task is intentionally shifted from the instructor to the learner over time (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). When learners are presented with new content, skills, or strategies, instruction begins with high levels of support such as modelling and scaffolding before moving to independent practice. While a previous model of the gradual release of responsibility (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) included three steps (modelling, scaffolding, independent work), Fisher and Frey (2014) have developed a slightly adapted version that includes a fourth step – collaborative learning. This gradual release of responsibility framework consists of the teacher providing focused instruction (e.g., explicit instruction, modelling), guided instruction (e.g., scaffolding with high to low levels of instructor support), collaborative learning (e.g., learners working together with the new skills and instructor scaffolding as necessary), and independent learning (e.g., learners complete the tasks independently) (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Instructors are responsible for knowing their learners' needs and abilities, providing adequate supports, and removing those supports when appropriate. Instructors are also responsible for providing formative, action-oriented feedback, so that learners can eventually complete the tasks independently and work towards becoming independent learners.

Instructors are responsible for knowing their learners' needs and abilities, providing adequate supports, and removing those supports when appropriate.

Before I describe each of the four steps of this framework with ESL adult literacy learners, I would like to return to Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development as this theory is implicit within the gradual release of responsibility framework. As discussed in Chapter 3, Vygotsky (1978) distinguishes between learners' actual development level (i.e., what learners can do independently) and their zone of proximal development (i.e., what is

emerging in learners' skills and knowledge). While CLB levels can represent learners' actual developmental level, all learners differ in their zones of proximal development, or what they are able to achieve with support, due to a variety of factors such as home and school environments, amount of modifications and support provided at school and at home, and instructors' abilities, time, and resources (Elliott, 2003).

Years of prior education and availability of first language skills to transfer into learning a subsequent language can influence rates of progress and supports required to progress (National Institute for Literacy, 2010; Watt & Lake, 2004). ESL adult literacy learners may lack important knowledge and skills such as metalinguistic knowledge and metacognitive thinking skills. August (2004; as cited in National Institute for Literacy, 2010) found that years of prior literacy training affects transferability skills: "Learners with higher levels of literacy could use higher-level thinking and reading techniques to read and understand English, but those with low literacy (below fourth grade) did not have the advantage of transferring those skills" (p. 5). Gaps in concepts, skills, and strategies can lead ESL adult literacy learners to have different zones of proximal development than more literate peers.

In light of differences between and within individuals, ESL instructors need to consider both the language *and* the literacy skill development needs for ESL adult literacy learners. The continua in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) can be used to approximate ESL adult literacy learners' zones of proximal development. An underlying assumption of these continua is that learners enter at different points based on their readiness and unique learning histories: "The Continuum also serves as a reminder of the uniqueness of each learner; those who use it will see that no individual is at the same degree of ability for all skills, and that no two individuals have the same pattern of skill development" (CCLB, 2014, p. 105). As Ausubel (1968) stated, understanding learners' actual developmental level is essential in planning

instructional supports to move learners forward: “*If I had to reduce all of educational psychology to just one principle, I would say this: The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach him accordingly*” (p. vi, italics in original). If instruction occurs beyond learners’ zones of proximal development, learners may experience frustration as the content will be too difficult.

To exemplify how to use the reading continuum in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) to approximate learners’ zones of proximal development, we can consider learners who are working in the Emerging level for decoding text. At this level, learners can recognize that letters have both a sound and a name. With modelling and support, these learners could reasonably be expected to begin to differentiate a few familiar two-letter words (e.g., an, in, on) consistent with their zone of proximal development (i.e., in the Emerging+ level). However, these learners could not be expected to attend to first, medial, and final letters and their corresponding sound when guessing unfamiliar words (i.e., Building+ level) even after modelling and support as this expectation typically would lie well beyond their current zone of proximal development, thus being too difficult to comprehend or ‘unpack’.

The goal of implementing the gradual release of responsibility, with the underlying theory of Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development, is that instructors need to support learners in becoming independent learners. ESL adult literacy learners need extra supports in developing a variety of concepts, skills, and strategies that are required to move them towards independent learning in academic contexts.

In this section I describe each of the four steps of the gradual release of responsibility framework. Even though I address them in a specific sequence, instructors are not required to adhere strictly to this order. Instructors can move

flexibly among these steps as long as learners are not expected to complete tasks independently until the requisite concepts, skills, and strategies are attained in the previous steps (Fisher & Frey, 2014).



Focused Instruction

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What is it?

Focused instruction represents the part of the lesson during which the instructor assumes all or most of the responsibility for completing the task by modelling or demonstrating how to do it (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). **Modelling** is an instructional technique in which an expert or skilled other demonstrates to a novice how to use a skill or strategy, often by thinking-aloud the steps and mental processes involved in a process (Grabe & Stoller, 2013; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Regan & Berkeley, 2012; Rupley, Blair, & Nichols, 2009; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Typically, components of modelling strategic behaviours include providing declarative (i.e., what), procedural (i.e., how), and conditional (i.e., when and why) knowledge of the skill or strategy (e.g., Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1983). Similar to the first whole of the interactive instructional approach, instructors clearly indicate the purpose of learning during focused instruction so that learners understand what to focus on and what the connections are between what they are doing and why, how, and when to do it (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Focused instruction is very teacher-centred.

How do we use it?

Focused instruction can occur at any part of the lesson, and could take up to 15 minutes (Fisher & Frey, 2014). The primary instructional technique for focused instruction is modelling or demonstrating the skills and strategies. The degree of explicitness and the choice of skills and strategies are based on learners' readiness, or actual developmental levels, and zones of proximal development. As instructors, we do not want to model skills and processes for which learners

already possess competence. We want to demonstrate how to use the skills and strategies that are within reach of our learners, but that they cannot yet do independently.

Aspects to include in Focused Instruction (Fisher & Frey, 2014):

- ✓ State the purpose of the skill/strategy.
- ✓ Provide declarative knowledge (i.e., define it, say what it is) about the skill/strategy.
- ✓ Provide procedural knowledge about the skill/strategy (e.g., state how to use it, the steps involved).
- ✓ Provide conditional knowledge about the skill/strategy (i.e., state when and why it is used).
- ✓ Use a think-aloud to model skilled thinking.
- ✓ Provide models or exemplars of sample tasks.

Key Features of Focused Instruction (Fisher & Frey, 2014)

1. Establishing the purpose of instruction. This is more than posting and reading through a daily agenda. Instructors need to communicate clearly the reason for doing the activities on the agenda. This helps learners know what to pay attention to and reflect on.
2. Modelling/Demonstrating. Modelling is used to show how use cognitive processes (e.g., how to read); **demonstration** is used to show physical tasks or procedures (e.g., holding a pencil, letter formation). These techniques typically consist of several elements including naming the skill or strategy, stating the purpose of the skill or strategy and explaining when to use it, connecting it to prior learning and experiences, demonstrating it, alerting learners about errors to avoid, and assessing the use of the skill or strategy. Modelling/demonstrating includes a narrative about the declarative, procedural, conditional, and reflective components of learning. Learners are being taught how to do something and how to analyze their success when doing it.

3. **Thinking aloud.** Thinking aloud involves orally describing how one makes decisions, implements skills, activates problem-solving approaches, and evaluates whether success has been achieved. The purpose of a think-aloud is to provide an opportunity for learners to see how more skilled others synthesize skills and to show habits of mind. It can also encourage learners to become aware of their own thinking processes.
4. **Noticing.** Noticing refers to teachers' abilities to observe learners' understanding and plan/adapt lessons based on need. Closely linked to the second step of the gradual release of responsibility framework, guided instruction, when teachers notice how learners respond to instruction, teachers can provide appropriate scaffolding without simplifying the content or processes. Noticing involves interpreting how learners respond to instruction so scaffolding of appropriate questions, cues and prompts can be provided.

Examples in Context



(Peter, 2015)

Although the level of the learners is very low in Mu's class, the instructor always starts with an agenda. In Lesson Plan 1 (see Section 3) the agenda provides a plan for the class involving an imperative

verb (e.g., Say word; See video)

and is supported with gestures and/or visuals. The agenda is referred to throughout the lesson and is checked off as activities are completed. This provides learners with a sense of accomplishment, a sense of when activities begin and end, and an understanding that the instructor comes to

Using a daily agenda provides learners with a sense of accomplishment, a sense of when activities begin and end, and an understanding that the instructor comes to class with a plan.

class with a plan.

In Mu's class, learners are developing their ability to understand that print can be used for different purposes such as providing instructions. Once the vocabulary and phrases are developed in the first whole aspect of the lesson by naming real items, singing a song, and miming actions, the instructor focuses attention on photographs. Learners are guided to identify the items in the photos, and the instructor models how to connect the imperative sentences to the photographs by pointing to the photos, singing the familiar song, and doing the familiar actions. The instructor provides brief and simple verbal descriptions of this as learners' listening and speaking skills are very low. Refer to Lesson Plan 1 for to see how Focused Instruction is incorporated in the skill development phase of this lesson.



(Nijssen, 2013)

Students in Adama's class are working on learning how to set purposes for reading. In this lesson (see Lesson Plan 3 in Section 3), the instructor models through a think-aloud how to set a purpose for reading. During this modelling phase, the instructor provides declarative (i.e., purposes are plans for reading that guide our attention while reading), procedural (i.e., think about what you already know, what you would like to know, and make a list of questions), and conditional knowledge (i.e., can be used for all types of texts, and it helps you prepare for and focus on reading) for setting purposes before reading (Almasi & Fullerton, 2012). The instructor provides the following information:

I brainstormed a list of what I already know about the esophagus. You can see from this list that I know that the esophagus is a tube that brings food from the mouth to the stomach. I also know about some parts that are connected to the esophagus. I know that the esophagus is a tube that connects the mouth to the stomach. I know that there is a valve at the top

because it is beside the wind pipe. The wind pipe opens for breathing, and the esophagus opens for swallowing. I know that at the bottom of the esophagus there is also a valve because my husband sometimes gets heartburn. This is when there is a burning feeling in the chest when the acid from the stomach moves up through the valve into the esophagus. I know that this is a problem from my husband and he has to take special medicine. This is what I know. But, I do have some questions. I wonder how the food moves through the esophagus – does it just fall down with the force of gravity, or is there something inside the esophagus like muscles or hairs that help the food move? I remember as a kid, my parents always telling me to eat while sitting up and not while lying down. Was this something to do with the esophagus and how food travels through it? I don't know. I would like to find out more about this so I am going to write down my question: [write on the board] How does food move through the esophagus?

What is the value of it?

Individuals do not learn to read by maturation alone - individuals must be taught to read (Blair, Rupley, & Nichols, 2007; Fisher, Frey & Lapp, 2009). Focused instruction calls for explicit instruction on the parts of the whole-part-whole instructional approach. We know that ESL adult literacy learners have gaps in their

first language literacy development, so explicitly teaching them the what, how, and why of using reading skills and strategies is required to move these learners forward in their use of literacy skills and strategies.

ESL adult literacy learners have gaps in their first language literacy development, so explicitly teaching them the what, how, and why of using reading skills and strategies is required to move these learners forward in their use of literacy skills and strategies.



Guided Instruction

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What is it?

Guided instruction is the transitional part of the lesson during which instructors provide scaffolded instruction that assists learners in moving from instructor-supported practice to being able to do the task independently (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). **Scaffolding** is defined as the process of providing temporary supports by more experienced to less experienced individuals (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976).

Essentially, support that is provided revolves around the cognitive load, the processing demands, or the cognitive activity or responsibility for the task (Almasi & Fullerton, 2012). Almasi and Fullerton (2012) describe that the degrees of demand are based on the social supports and criteria within the task and texts. If there is more social support, the cognitive responsibility is lessened. If learners are working individually, the cognitive responsibility is the highest. The continuum moves from teacher/whole class to small groups, to trios, to pairs, to individuals. Almasi and Fullerton (2012) also describe the complexity of the task as moving from real events and experiences to movies or videos to wordless picture books to read-alouds to shared reading to picture books to text. When tasks are based in experiences and events, there is less of a cognitive load. When tasks are fully text-based, there is greater the cognitive load. Almasi and Fullerton (2012) recommend that when introducing a new concept or strategy, instructors should reduce processing demands by using concrete and familiar tasks and texts so that it is easier for readers to be strategic.

With opportunities to practise using the skills and strategies, it is intended that learners will eventually be able to use those skills and strategies independently. Almasi and Fullerton (2012) state that learning to become a strategic reader will not happen over a few lessons or even over one school year, but rather requires a whole-school commitment to supporting learners in their development. While

this idea is situated in the context of teaching children, the same could be assumed to hold true for ESL adult literacy learners.

A key building block to becoming an independent and strategic reader is feedback that is oriented around learner self-reflection and evaluation. While feedback based on effort and use of strategies can increase self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Mason, 2004; Nelson & Manset-Williamson, 2006), learners' self-reflection and self-evaluation of strategy use is also recommended to promote self-regulation (Almasi & Fullerton, 2012).

A key building block to becoming an independent and strategic reader is feedback that is oriented around learner self-reflection and evaluation.

How do we use it?

There are three characteristics of scaffolding: contingency, fading, and (Van de Pol, Volman, & Beishuizen, 2010). **Contingency** refers to how instructors adapt their teaching to meet the needs of the learners. For example, instructors might provide learners with prompts or cues. **Fading** refers to the gradual withdrawal of scaffolding based on learners' responsiveness to supports and their progress. For example, instructors may shift the social dynamic from working as a whole class to working in groups, trios, or partners. The **transfer of responsibility** refers to when learners take increasing control of their learning and the transfer can occur during collaborative group work, self-reflection, and self-evaluation.

Van de Pol et al. (2010) state that scaffolding is based on an interactive process in which both instructors and learners participate actively in the process. Fisher and Frey (2014) also describe guided instruction/scaffolding as a dialogic process between instructors and learners. However asking questions or providing cues does not necessarily mean that instruction is being scaffolded appropriately. The questions or prompts provided must stem from learners' needs and be used contingently with those needs. Understanding learners' current needs can be a

challenging process and instructors need to dedicate class time to determine what kinds of supports learners require (Rodgers, 2005; Wood, 2003; Wood & Wood, 1996). For example, instructors can pose questions designed to determine learners' understanding and ask random learners questions rather than only asking learners who indicate that they know the answers (Pettis, 2014). In addition, instructors can increase their

Asking questions or providing cues does not necessarily mean that instruction is being scaffolded appropriately. The questions or prompts provided must stem from learners' need and be used contingently with those needs.

understanding of where learners are in their reading skill and strategy use by observing learners and taking anecdotal notes as learners read, taking a running record to determine use of decoding skills, syntactic structures, and semantic information (Clay, 2000), administering standardized summative assessments, having learners retell the story in their own words to determine their understanding, or having learners share their thought processes during reading through a student-led think-aloud (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

Some other techniques for obtaining a quick picture of understanding are as follows. (Adapted from Chapin, O'Connor, & Anderson, 2009; Pettis, 2014, and William, 2011). *Techniques for determining learners' actual developmental level:*

- Provide wait time: In this technique, the instructor poses a question, and says something like, "Take your time, we'll wait". The instructor then waits for most to all of the class to raise their hands to respond. Then, the instructor calls on any student to answer. While teachers may feel uncomfortable with long periods of silence (e.g., 45 seconds), consistently and patiently providing learners with thinking time can encourage them to participate in thinking through their ideas. When learners are consistently provided with too little time to think, they may give up using this time to formulate their own ideas as others are regularly called on

before they are able to put their ideas together.

- Use popsicle sticks to randomly call on learners: When posing questions to the class, the teacher can randomly ask learners to respond. One way to ensure randomness is to write learners names on Popsicle sticks and choose a new stick when a question needs answering. Once all the Popsicle sticks have been used, the process starts again. It may take several days before each student has been called on. Depending on the needs of the learners, instructors could choose two learners randomly and then ask for volunteers to answer the next question.
- Use all-student response systems such as the following:
 - Traffic lights: The instructor states the objectives at the beginning of the lesson. At the end of the lesson learners rate themselves by holding up using colour card. Green = I feel confident I achieved the lesson goals; Yellow = I think I partially learned the lesson goals; Red = I don't think I learned the intended goals. This could be adapted by using green, yellow, and red party cups that are stacked. The colour that shows represents learners' level of understanding.
 - Red and green discs: Learners are provided with a disc that has red on one side and green on the other. At the beginning of the lesson, all the discs are placed with the green side up. As the lesson progresses, when learners notice that they are confused or are struggling with the skills/content, they flip the disc to the red side. This shows instructors in real-time how learners are responding to the lesson. This can be a useful technique for learners who do not often ask questions, as it can show when learners need help.
 - Fist to five: Learners indicate their confidence in their understanding by using their hands to indicate a rating from 0 (the fist) to 5 (all five fingers).
 - ABCD cards: For multiple choice activities, each learner is provided with four cards, each labeled with one letter. The instructor poses a multiple-choice question and learners hold up the card that

represents their response. Instructors can see clearly which students understand and which do not and adjust the discussion and lesson accordingly.

- Mini whiteboards: Each learner is provided with a mini whiteboard and a marker. The instructor poses a question that requires a written response, and learners think, write their answer, and hold up the white board for the instructor to see.

Instructors may offer different kinds of supports or scaffolds to different learners as part of guided instruction, with the provision that these supports should be flexible and adaptable based on learner development. Fisher and Frey (2014) warn that instructors should not provide supports based on ability groupings alone, but rather should be responsive to learner needs and progress. They state that guided instruction is not the same for every student and does not necessarily happen every day. As LINC instructors, we may have experienced the challenge of trying to meet with all learners every day. However, it is recommended to make intentional connections with all learners throughout the week, and provide more explicit supports to those who require it by meeting with some learners more often than others and changing groupings (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

The following list provides examples of high-level, mid-level, and low-level scaffolds. (Compiled from Almasi & Fullerton, 2012; Fisher & Frey, 2014; Rodgers, 2005; William, 2011 Wood et al., 1976).

Scaffolding: High levels of support from teacher or peer. Instructors can do the following:

- Instruct: tell learners what to do and explain how and why to do it (e.g., Andres, we know this word begins the letter 'c'. We know that in this context we are talking about school subjects. The letter 'c' sounds like /k/. This word says 'computers').
- Model or demonstrate: show learners how to do something or read

something.

- Use questioning: ask questions and require a response to uncover areas of understanding and confusion.
- Reduce choices: prompt learners to complete a task by reducing the number of possible responses (e.g., When we see a word in all-caps, do we whisper or say the word loudly?).
- Have learners share their own think-aloud for the task to determine areas of confusion and provide support as needed.
- Clarify what learners have said by repeating what they said with a questioning intonation (e.g., You said, “This word begins with the letter ‘d’, so it says, ‘ball’?).
- Lead whole class reading activities.

Scaffolding: Mid-levels of support (teacher support with student involvement).

Instructors can do the following:

- Provide prompts to draw attention to what learners already know but have forgotten at the moment (e.g., “Remember that we used the strategy of activating background knowledge before reading something last week. What do we remember about how to do activate our background knowledge? Why does it help us read better?”).
- Focus learners’ attention on specific parts of the task or the text (e.g., refer to steps listed on the board or a poster and indicate the last step that learners completed. Indicate what the next step is).
- Provide gestures to draw attention to something that has been missed (e.g., point to a word on a word wall, point to an item in a picture).
- Have learners read with a partner or small groups.

Scaffolding: Low levels of support (greater student involvement). Instructors can do the following:

- Provide verbal direction: Telling the student to take a specific action (e.g., “Check to make sure you are right,” or, “Look at the first letter of that word. Read that word again.”).
- Encourage self-monitoring (e.g., “You read, ‘Pat hurt her bake [instead of

back]’. Does that make sense?”).

- Encourage metacognitive awareness by using learner reflections, journals, and self-evaluations (e.g., “What strategies did you use? How well did they help you?” Or “How well can you use the initial letter and context to guess a new word?”).
- Have learners read independently.

If instructors are unsure of the appropriate level of support to provide, they can begin with the low levels of support and move to the mid to the high levels of support as learners respond.

When scaffolding student learning, instructors should provide feedback to learners that will move them forward. We know that feedback that emphasizes and attributes success to effort and strategy use enhances learners’ reading performance and reading self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Chan & Lam, 2007; Chularut & DeBacker, 2004; Mason, 2004; Massengill, 2003; Nelson & Manset-Williamson, 2006; Schunk, 2003). Recommendations for action-oriented feedback include providing comments-only feedback that touch on the following (1) what learners did well and explaining associated positive outcomes, (2) what learners are capable of doing or could do in future tasks, (3) indicate a point of growth that the student is capable of doing, and (4) what learners should stop doing because it was not helpful and could have a negative impact (Pettis, 2014). Pettis (2014) recommends that instructors provide three types of feedback comments and that this feedback require learners to do some corrective action such as correcting errors and rewriting the paragraph.

Guided instruction can be used to support all learners ranging from those who are struggling to those who are advanced. Guided instruction can be an opportune time to differentiate instruction. For example, we can differentiate content by modifying texts to make them simpler or more challenging, or provide more examples or models. We can differentiate process by asking

varying types of prompts and cues, or providing visual supports.

Examples in Context



(Liévano, 2014)

In Andres' class (see Lesson 2 in section 3), learners are developing the word recognition strategy of making educated guesses about a word by looking at the letter-sound cues, and thinking about oral vocabulary and the context. The instructor uses a

think-aloud to model

how to make informed guesses about a word by using the initial letter and the context. The instructor also provides declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge about using this strategy. For guided instruction, learners work in small groups to apply the modelled strategy by locating a word card and physically moving it to complete a sentence. The instructor circulates to ensure that learners are saying the correct words and following instructions. Learners are asked to explain how they identified their words. Responding to these prompts encourages awareness of strategy use. If learners struggle, the instructor can provide scaffolding such as modelling the strategy use again, clarifying what learners said by repeating it as a question, or focusing learners' attention to specific parts such as the initial letter.

Learners can be provided with supports such as working in small groups to complete a task while the instructor circulates to provide guidance, prompts, and extra modelling when needed.

What is the value of it?

The purpose of providing guided instruction is to support learners in transitioning away from reliance on the instructor to becoming self-regulated learners. The provision of scaffolding has been found to increase metacognitive

awareness, use of reading strategies, and reading comprehension (Dabarera, Renandya, & Zhang, 2014; Iddings, Risko, & Rampulla, 2009; Zhang, 2011) in adult, elementary and secondary ESL and English-speaking students. These studies promote the provision of scaffolding in safe and supportive environments that involve explicit instruction, declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge for reading strategy use, activation of background knowledge, intentional scaffolding in group work, deviation from pre-designed lesson plans to meet learners' needs in situ, and engaging learners in authentic conversations about texts through prompting and questioning according to learners' level of readiness. As Almasi and Fullerton (2012) state, we do not want learners to simply use reading strategies when they are told; we want learners to become self-regulated strategic readers.



Collaborative Learning

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What is it?

Collaborative learning occurs when learners work with others to apply skills, strategies, and knowledge, and support each other in the process (Fisher & Frey, 2014). More than just group work, this phase of the lesson provides learners with the chance to test out their language and literacy skills and become part of the knowledge community to which they want to belong (Bruffee, 1993). Within the gradual release of responsibility framework, learners in the collaborative learning phase take on more responsibility for the task completion. The instructors' role is to step back, letting learners work together. Instructors may step in to provide guided instruction (e.g., prompting, cueing) as required in order to meet specific cognitive and metacognitive needs of individual learners and/or groups (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

Collaborative learning occurs when learners work with at least one other person, use targeted vocabulary and language structures, and use socio-culturally

appropriate language for respectfully keeping the conversation moving forward and working towards developing a rich and deep understanding of the topic (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Learners can work with a partner, in a trio, or in a small group. Activities or tasks can range from sharing information or opinions (e.g., peer interviews) to problem solving, or working to create or produce something (e.g., a poster presentation).

To collaborate effectively with others, individuals must use soft skills to communicate. Soft skills are grounded in developing sociocultural competence that can be addressed in ESL classes. **Sociocultural competence** refers to learners' pragmatic knowledge about how to communicate appropriately within various social and cultural contexts (Celce-Murcia, 2007). Variables of sociocultural knowledge include social contextual factors (e.g., age, gender, status), stylistic appropriateness (e.g., politeness strategies, registers/levels of formality), and cultural factors (e.g., background knowledge of the target language group, dialects, cross-cultural awareness) (Celce-Murcia, 2007). For example, we might use different expressions or grammar when speaking with our supervisor versus our neighbour.

The collaborative learning process should be “messy” and experimental as learners work together to build their knowledge, consolidate parts, confirm prior knowledge, and reveal partial understandings and misconceptions (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Collaborative learning is an opportunity to apply recently learned skills and strategies (e.g., previously practised in focused or guided instruction) to new situations or to engage in a **spiral review** (i.e., return to and build upon skills, strategies, and knowledge developed earlier in the term or the school year) (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

How do we use it?

Collaborative learning opportunities should be built intentionally into lessons, modules, and classroom routines. During collaborative practice, learners should not be introduced to new information, but rather have the opportunity to apply and consolidate what they already know into a new context or application such as a spiral review of previous knowledge (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

Collaborative learning opportunities should be built intentionally into lessons, modules, and classroom routines.

If instructors observe students committing blunders or experiencing challenges during collaborative learning, instructors can provide modelling and guidance to them as a whole class or individually. Various speech acts or talk moves can be modelled, taught, and practised to develop socio-culturally appropriate phrases with learners. I will give you a few examples of when I noticed challenges from my own classroom experiences and how I provided guidance to my learners. Over several classes, I found that some learners froze when I asked them to find a partner. So, I taught them phrases for asking someone to be their partner (e.g., Can we be partners? Would you like to be my partner?), and I observed that the process of finding a partner went more smoothly. In another example, when I assigned productive group work (i.e., make a poster presentation on a Canadian symbol), I found that certain learners took over the process and did all of the work. So, I spoke to the class about how everyone needed to have a role. We brainstormed incomplete tasks and I suggested that each group divide the remaining work evenly, and I supplied certain phrases that learners could use for this discussion (e.g., I would like to ..., You are good at ..., would you mind working on that more?). I heard learners using these phrases and divvying up the work more evenly. This taught me a lesson that I need to ensure that tasks are set up equitably from the start, and that learners need to have the language to deal with conflict and delegating tasks fairly.

You might find it valuable to refer to the Learning Strategies continuum of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) that focuses on skills and strategies for working with others (p. 18). In addition, you may also want to refer to the Incorporating Pragmatics in a CLB-Based Program in the *CLB Support Kit* (CICb, 2012, pp. 71-98) for ideas on how to integrate and assess pragmatics in LINC classes.

Collaborative learning activities occur once learners have developed a sufficient amount of knowledge and skills that they can apply to a new context. Once your learners have reached this point, there are various types of group activities in which your learners can engage. Ideally, these activities incorporate skill-using or fluency-oriented tasks to allow learners to work with targeted language and literacy skills and strategies. Learners can do the following *collaborative learning activities* (based on my own experiences and the linked websites):

- Peer interviews: Learners are provided with or create a list of questions to ask a partner (e.g., What is your name? What is your address?). After interviewing a partner, learners can share their findings with another set of partners or with the whole class. This could lead to role-play for registering for at a new health clinic for example.
- Creating and performing a role-play: Learners may be provided with sentence frames or structures to include, but partners or trios work together to create and perform a role-play on a topic using the vocabulary and structures studied in class (e.g., complaining about apartment problems).
- Think-pair-share: Provide the learners with a question or a problem. Learners are given a few minutes to think about and/or write down their answer. Next, they are given some more time to discuss their ideas with a partner. Following this, partners share their ideas with the class (See [http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/ think-pair-share](http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/think-pair-share) for more information)
- List-group-label: Select a topic or main concept from a reading. Have

learners brainstorm all the words they can think of that relate to the concept. In groups, learners work to sort the words into categories. Tell learners that words can go into any category, but groups may need to justify their reasoning if words seem misplaced. Once the words are categorized, have learners create a title or a label for each set of words, again with the idea that they may need to explain their choices. (See http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/list_group_label for more information)

- 4 corners: Post one poster in each corner of the room. The four posters read strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Pose a question or a problem to the class. Learners move the corner that represents their opinion. In each corner, learners discuss their reasoning for their response. This activity could be extended by having groups try to convince the opposite group (e.g., strongly disagree tries to convince strongly agree) to change their minds.
- Collaborative posters/presentations: Learners work in partners, trios, or groups to present their understanding of a topic or concept to the class. Groups work to build a visual representation of the subject area such as through a poster or Power Point presentation. Some examples include making a timeline on important life events of group members, illustrating a process such as making a salad or treating a wound, sharing information on Canadian symbols in preparation for taking the citizenship test, or making a Power Point presentation that includes a short video that illustrates the life cycle of an insect.
- Jigsaw: Learners are divided into groups. Each group is given a different text or topic to read about (e.g., subtopics such as the heart, the lungs, and the stomach for internal organs) and to become an expert on. This is the home group. Once each group feels confident in their understanding of the text, they prepare to share the information with the other groups. New groups are formed with one member from each home group. Learners teach their material and others listen and take notes using a

graphic organizer (See <http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/jigsaw> for more information)

If using any collaborative language tasks for assessment purposes, it may be beneficial to indicate that it was done collaboratively rather than independently (Pettis, 2014). The *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) recommends that assessment comments indicate, “Achieved, Achieved with help, Needs more practice”.

In addition to participating in collaborative activities, learners can also develop skills for supporting their peers and being resources for each other. Here are a few of the techniques recommended by William (2011) that encourage students to act as learning resources for each other.

Collaborative Learning – Techniques for learners to be peer resources:

- C3B4ME: or “see three before me”. Before learners can ask the instructor a question, they must ask three peers. This promotes the concept that there is more than one teacher in the class.
- End-of-topic questions: At the end of a lesson or module, put the learners into groups and have them discuss if they have any questions. Group members may be able to answer the questions, and it is a good opportunity to review the material. If groups have questions for the instructor they can ask or write the question on a paper. Each group provides the teacher with the written question(s) and the teacher addresses them.
- What did we learn today?: Five to ten minutes before the end of class, learners form groups and create a list of everything they learned in that lesson. Groups report one or more items from their list to the class. This can be beneficial to help learners begin to identify in a collaborative setting what they have learned before they are asked to report independently what they have learned.
- I-You-We Checklist: At the end of a group activity, learners reflect on

their and their group members' contributions to the task. Each learner writes down one thing that they contributed to the group, what group members contributed, and evaluate the quality of the work overall.

Examples in Context



(Peter, 2015)

In Mu's class (see Lesson Plan 1 in Section 3), learners work in groups to practise associating an instruction with print (i.e., a photograph). When learners are given the photos in sequence, they are asked point to the photo and say the corresponding instruction. Then, individuals take turns within groups, with group members supporting them. If an individual forgets the instruction or points to the incorrect picture, group members offer corrections. The instructor circulates to observe group interactions and assist group members in providing support to the individual. For example, if Mu makes a mistake in saying the instruction and none of the group members notices, the instructor might interject and say, "Hmmm. That didn't sound right. Asha, what should Mu say for that picture?" This kind of guidance, used only when required, will support these low-level literacy learners in behaving as supports for each other.

Learners work in small groups to complete a task and provide corrective supports to their group members. The instructor interjects only when group members need guidance in supporting their peers.



(Nijssen, 2013)

In Adama's class (see Lesson Plan 3 in Section 3), learners began the class with a collaborative brainstorming task to activate their background knowledge about the part of the digestive system

they elected to study.

Learners work collaboratively in groups both at the beginning of the lesson to activate background knowledge and in the middle of the lesson to apply the new strategy.

Although learners are familiar with this strategy, the instructor elicits the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge about this strategy by questioning and prompting

students. Once these concepts are reviewed, learners work in collaborative groups to use the strategy. Then, groups are encouraged to use the list-group-label strategy to organize their ideas into categories. Later, learners remain in their groups to apply the previously modelled strategy of setting purposes for reading. Learners work collaboratively as the instructor circulates to provide guided instruction to groups as necessary.

What is the value of it?

By intentionally providing opportunities for collaborative learning in a supportive environment, and arming learners with sociolinguistic knowledge, learners may be able to shift their levels of dependence on the teacher to valuing peers and the self as knowledge sources (Taylor et al., 2003). As learners shift away from dependence on the instructor to trusting peers and oneself, learners may increase their confidence and abilities to self-regulate (Bruffee, 1993).



Independent Learning

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What is it?

The **independent learning** phase of the gradual release of responsibility framework represents the part of the lesson during which learners assume all or most of the responsibility for the task completion (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). This phase involves learners using various self-monitoring, metacognitive, and academic self-regulating strategies that were modelled and practised during focused instruction, guided instruction, and collaborative learning contexts (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). It is essential that learners consolidate their understanding through the other phases of learning before being required to apply the skills and strategies on their own. The earlier phases of the lesson or module are intended to support learners in developing the skills and habits of mind associated with what is being studied so that learners can eventually complete the work independently (Fisher & Frey, 2014). There are two key features of independent learning: metacognition and academic self-regulation.

It is essential that learners consolidate their understanding through the other phases of learning before being required to apply the skills and strategies on their own.

Metacognition refers to the processes that learners use to plan, organize, self-instruct, self-monitor, and self-evaluate through the learning process (Zimmerman, 1986). These processes are developed through strategy training that emphasizes the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge of each strategy (Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1983; Zimmerman, 1994). This awareness ideally has been built up through the prior three phases of instruction within this framework.

Self-regulation consists of the metacognitive processes, motivational processes,

and behavioural processes that learners engage in to be active participants in their own learning processes (Zimmerman, 1994). Self-regulation involves acting upon the metacognitive perceptions that learners experience while doing a task (Fisher & Frey, 2014). For example, while reading we may become aware that we do not understand something because we self-monitor our comprehension (i.e., metacognition). Following this awareness we may decide to reread the passage or seek help by asking a more knowledgeable other (e.g., peer, instructor) for help (i.e., self-regulation). The noticing of the problem represents metacognitive awareness, and the behaviours that follow represent self-regulation.

One element of metacognitive self-regulation includes time planning and time management (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Zimmerman, 1994). Time management can be modelled, scaffolded through the use of checklists and reminders, and through learner self-monitoring of their use of time (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Zimmerman, 1994). In the context of ESL adult literacy, time management might include concepts such as arriving on time for class, staying focused on a task in order to complete it, and using schedules, planners, and/or calendars to plan time (CCLB, 2014). I have had some students who are always late for class, or take long breaks. To address these issues, I try to speak to these individuals to determine why they are late, and to emphasize the cultural expectation of being on time. I might remind all learners at the start of break what time they are expected to be back in class. If learners are late, I have gone to the lunch room to call them to class. I have also seen some schools use a bell to indicate the end of break time. These strategies may be useful at earlier phases of understanding time management, but should be withdrawn when learners are able to manage their time independently. Time management for longer tasks (e.g., preparing for a presentation, creating and performing a role-play based on a reading) can be scaffolded through activities such as providing timelines, so that learners can eventually apply these time management skills to academic tasks.

The motivational processes involve learners viewing themselves as competent,

self-efficacious, and autonomous (Zimmerman, 1986). This connects to the growth mindset that is integral to differentiating instruction. For example, if learners attribute their success to effort and use of strategies, their reading self-efficacy, reading performance, perseverance, and motivation can increase (Bandura, 1986; Chan & Lam, 2007; Chularut & DeBacker, 2004; Mason, 2004; Massengill, 2003; Nelson & Manset-Williamson, 2006; Schunk, 2003; Zimmerman, 1994).

The behavioural self-regulation processes involve learners selecting, structuring, and creating environments that promote learning (Zimmerman, 1986). This includes learners self-recording or cognitively self-monitoring (Zimmerman, 1994). The use of **learner self-assessment** (what learners can do, and how well they can do it) and **reflection** (what learning processes help learners learn) is promoted by LINC funders and should be incorporated into modules whenever possible (Pettis, 2014). Learners should clearly understand the purpose and objectives of each lesson and how these relate to their own language and literacy goals so that they can think about how they are learning (Pettis, 2014). For example, in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners*, the CCLB (2014) indicates that learners can be supported in developing abilities to identify that there are different ways to learn (e.g., in groups, instructor-led, with paper), to identify how each of these ways to learn contributes to their literacy development, and to select different approaches to learning (e.g., choosing to work with a partner or alone). Communication around these elements should carry on through all the phases of the gradual release of responsibility framework.

An important element of behavioural self-regulation is **calibration** which involves, “the ability to accurately self-assess in order to affect learning decisions” (Fisher & Frey, 2014, p. 101). Learners vary in their self-understanding of how their current skills and performance match or differ from where they would like to be. This gap may be evident in learner self-assessments that are

accurate or are vastly different from what instructors observe. For example, you may have had overly confident learners who declare that they are ready to move on to the next level, but as the instructor, you can see many areas in which those learners need to improve before progressing. This overconfidence may be a result of learners not knowing what they do not know. Instructors can provide formative feedback to learners to build awareness of these gaps (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

Calibration also connects to the understanding of task prioritization. **Task prioritization** represents the process of determining which tasks are more difficult and therefore require more time to complete (Fisher & Frey, 2014). By knowing what is easy or challenging for individuals as learners, and by knowing what parts of the task are more or less difficult, learners can plan their use of time better. In the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners*, the CCLB (2014) states that ESL adult literacy learners need to be able to manage and/or plan learning. Instructors can support developing students' understanding of task difficulty and/or associated time requirements by building class discussion around these topics. Instructors can include information around task prioritization in their instructions (Fisher & Frey, 2014). For example, when beginning a project such as researching a nutrient and preparing a presentation, the instructor might state that the research part will take the longest, and that groups can work together to plan the division of labour to complete this part of the task.

In addition, when learners select their own instructional supports (e.g., use of reference materials, asking teachers questions, referring to models), they are displaying evidence of being self-regulated learners (Zimmerman, 1994). These behavioural self-regulation processes are also supported in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) in the Learning Strategies: Managing Learning continuum. Within this continuum, the CCLB (2014) states that learners may need support to develop skills, strategies, and abilities such as

knowing when to access help, preparing and asking questions, gaining access to a variety of materials, resources, and learning opportunities (e.g., paper based, on-line).

Independent learning opportunities can occur in class or outside of class (i.e., homework) and may be linked to the final whole of the interactive instructional approach. Learning activities that could occur in class include reading and responding to a journal entry in a dialogue journal, reading a bus schedule to plan a weekend trip, or reading an invitation to an instructor-student conference. Homework can include any variety of tasks, but Fisher and Frey (2008) warn that instructors often assign homework too early in the instructional cycle (i.e., before the skills or strategies have been modelled, scaffolded, and collaboratively practiced). Fisher and Frey (2014) recommend that homework be used only for fluency-building activities, spiral review, application, and extension. When assigning independent reading to practise fluency, instructors must ensure that learners are provided with **at-level texts** (e.g., learners can read about 90% independently) so that learners are not challenged by vocabulary, decoding, or comprehension (McShane, 2005). Krashen (2005) also indicates that reading at home should be focused on reading for pleasure, not on skill-building activities per se. The *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) contains a continuum for reading fluency development that should also be consulted before assigning reading fluency homework so that homework expectations do not exceed learners' zones of proximal development.

When assigning homework for application purposes, learners are expected to apply the knowledge, skills, and strategies that have been modelled, guided, and collaboratively practiced to an independent learning situation. For example, learners could apply their reading skills by looking for and taking photographs of community signs (e.g., stop sign, one way street sign) in their neighbourhood that were recently studied in class

Spiral review as homework consists of learners reviewing past learning. Instructors direct learners to specific examples to review for homework so that links can be made between past and current learning. This can strengthen learners' ability to access background knowledge, develop binder organization skills, and increase awareness that text has meaning

Extension homework activities invite learners to extend their learning across topics and disciplines. For example, if learners are studying writing formal letters and citizenship topics such as the role of the Members of Parliament, learners may be asked to write a letter to the MP on a topic important to them (e.g., requesting that LINC classes be closer to their homes).

As learning occurs within the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), learners should still be expected to struggle a little during the independent learning phase. Within this phase, learners are still in the process of acquiring the new knowledge, skills, and strategies (Fisher & Frey, 2014). During independent learning activities, learners should be provided with formative, action-oriented feedback as well as opportunities to self-assess and self-reflect in order to deepen their knowledge, metacognitive awareness, and academic self-regulation abilities.

How do we use it?

Learners need to develop insight into their own learning. Instructors can support learners in this by using the following activities.

Independent Learning – Learner self-reflection techniques:

- **Traffic lights:** The instructor states the objectives at the beginning of the lesson. At the end of the lesson learners rate themselves using colour cards. Green = I feel confident I achieved the lesson goals; Yellow = I think I partially learned the lesson goals; Red = I don't think I learned the intended goals. This could be adapted by using green, yellow, and red

party cups that are stacked. The colour that shows represents the learners' level of understanding.

- Thumbs up, thumbs sideways, thumbs down: Similar to the above technique, learners use this technique to show thumbs up for complete understanding, thumbs sideways for partial understanding, and thumbs down for confusion
- Think-pair-share: Learners individually think about their answer to a question, share their ideas with a partner, and then share with the class. Some questions in this phase could include naming what they learned today, what was easy, what was challenging, what they could try next. This activity could be followed by the completion of a learning log or journal entry.
- Learning logs: Learners provide an oral or written response to questions such as the following: Today, I learned ..., From today's lesson, I liked ..., One thing I am not sure about is ..., My biggest question is ..., Today, I didn't like....
- Four questions: Instructors encourage learners to answer the following four questions while working collaboratively and independently: (1) What am I trying to accomplish, (2) What strategies am I using?, (3) How well am I using the strategies?, and (4) What else could I do? (Anderson, 2002; as cited in Fisher & Frey, 2014). These four questions promote metacognitive self-talk as learners are encouraged to identify the task's intended outcomes, figuring out what strategies to use to complete the task, self-monitor, and be flexible in their thinking.

This list is compiled from my own experiences as well as from Fisher and Frey (2014), Pettis (2014), and William (2011).

Examples in Context



(Peter, 2015)

Learners in Mu's class (see Lesson Plan 1 in Section 3) are not yet able to monitor metacognitive thinking or self-regulate learning. However, the instructor creates opportunities in class for learners to express their likes and dislikes for different kinds of activities (e.g., use thumbs-up, thumbs-sideways, or thumbs-down to indicate if they like the activity of singing and doing mimes) and to indicate how well they feel they can use the skills (e.g., use pictures to follow instructions). Activities that encourage learners to start thinking about their learning preferences and their confidence in using new skills in a gestural way may lay the groundwork for the development of metacognitive and self-regulation skills later. Learners may also see that instructors want to know what they feel and think about their reading skills, and this may promote the sense that learners are responsible for their own learning.

Activities that encourage learners to start thinking about their learning preferences and their confidence in using new skills in a gestural way may lay the groundwork for the development of metacognitive and self-regulation skills later.



(Liévano, 2014)

In Andres' class (see Lesson Plan 2 in Section 3), learners are beginning to think about their learning process and this is supported in self-assessment tasks. In this lesson, the instructor also provided many repetitions of and opportunities for learners to recall the declarative, procedural, and

All of these choices would have been modelled, scaffolded, and practised collaboratively before learners would be given the choice within the choice board.

conditional knowledge associated with the letter-sound cue word recognition strategy. At the end of the lesson, while individual learners demonstrate their skills in applying the strategy to read a calendar and pack a backpack, other learners work independently by selecting a task in the choice board. The tasks in the choice board represent skills that learners are able to complete independently such as doing a word search for the target vocabulary, matching a list of school subjects with corresponding items from flyers, filling in the blanks of a story, practising a spelling strategy. All of these choices would have been modelled, scaffolded, and practised collaboratively before learners would be given the choice within the choice board.

What is the value of it?

To do things independently or to become an expert in an area, individuals must possess certain qualities or characteristics that set them apart from novices. These include having an extensive knowledge base (i.e., declarative, procedural, conditional knowledge), being motivated to complete the task, using metacognition to regulate and monitor comprehension and performance, being able to analyze tasks (i.e., knowing what to do when there is a problem), and having a variety of strategies for accomplishing the tasks (Almasi & Fullerton, 2012). In the context of reading, good readers possess these characteristics, and for the most part, they can be taught. Supporting unskilled readers in developing these skills can allow learners to be active participants in their learning, and to take control of their learning (Almasi & Fullerton, 2012).

The gradual release of responsibility framework is one way of planning lessons that incorporates modelling, scaffolding, collaboration, and independent learning throughout lessons and modules. The four phases outlined here often are presented in this order, but sometimes instructors may want to switch up the order. Grant, Lapp, Fisher, Johnson, and Frey (2012) state that learners learn best when they have the opportunities to observe models of expert thinking, test their ideas with the knowledge that a skilled teacher will support and guide

them, explore and evaluate ideas with their peers, and apply their new skills and strategies to real-world authentic contexts either in or out of the classroom.

After Reading Questions

Think of a recent reading lesson you taught. What steps of the gradual release of responsibility process did you include? What order did you use them? Were any steps missing?

Section Three:

Lesson Plans

Introduction

Throughout Section Two of this handbook, I provided descriptive examples of the three instructional processes by referring to three learners: Mu, Andres, and Adama. In this section, I provide the complete lessons for each of these learners based the instructional contexts established earlier in the handbook.

Mu, Andres, and Adama are composite learners that I have developed for the purpose of this handbook and are based on ESL adult literacy learners I have met, taught, and heard of. They represent low, low-to-mid, and high-level literacy learners respectively. I chose to include this range of ESL adult literacy learners to clarify any misconception that *literacy* refers to low-level literacy learners only. It is important to remember that all ESL adult literacy learners require literacy training and support until the end of CLB 4L (CCLB, 2014). I hope that by including sample lesson plans for this range of learners instructors will be inspired to design lessons that incorporate literacy training for their learners from Foundation to CLB 4L.

These lesson plans incorporate the interactive instructional approach, and vary in their inclusion of the elements of differentiated instruction and the gradual release of responsibility framework. These variations reflect the reality that instructors do not need to provide differentiated instruction at every point of instruction, and that the steps in the gradual release of responsibility framework can move up and down from one step to another as long as learners are not expected work independently before acquiring the requisite skills and strategies (Fisher & Frey, 2014). I did not include examples of differentiating environment in these lesson plans. I excluded this aspect of differentiating instruction because it is dependent on the experiences, mindsets, and needs of instructors and learners. I also included possible ways to assess student learning including formative assessment, skill-using assessment, and self-

assessment. While the interactive instructional approach is recommended for use in all ESL adult literacy lesson designs (CCLB, 2014), it is important to remember that instructors do not need to incorporate all three instructional processes in every lesson. Instead, we should work towards incorporating the instructional elements into the whole-part-whole approach that make sense for our learners and our instructional contexts.

These lesson plans are intended to exemplify how the three instructional processes could be integrated in lesson design. These lesson plans are not intended to be prescriptive. Instructors should feel free to adapt these lesson plans according to their student needs and specific classes.

Each lesson plan includes the theme/topic, estimated amount of time, and description of the learner. Each lesson plan is designed around a real-world task with a described context. Instructional pre-requisites are included to inform instructors about what skills, strategies, and knowledge learners would be expected to have before beginning the lesson. Each lesson plan also defines CLB competencies and indicators, a primary reading skill/strategy, and other skills/strategies that are practised in the lesson. A rationale for the skill/strategy development for the learner is provided. Finally, teaching resources, materials, assessment tasks, and lesson extension ideas are provided. All lesson ideas are based on my experiences as an ESL adult literacy instructor unless otherwise cited.

All lesson plans are coded with an image and a colour-coded word. This coding is intended to provide instructors with a label and quick reference to the instructional processes. See the Lesson Plan Glossary to see what images and colours represent what aspects of the instructional processes.

Lesson Plans Glossary



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Whole



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Strategy



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Focused Instruction



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Guided Instruction



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Differentiation of Content



© Matt McInnes

Differentiation of Product



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Part



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Assessment



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Collaborative Learning



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Independent Learning



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Differentiation of Process

Table 1*Representation of Instructional Processes within the Lesson Plans*

	Interactive Instructional Approach			Differentiated Instruction					Gradual Release of Responsibility		
	First Whole	Part	Second Whole	Readiness	Interest	Learning profile	Content	Process	Focused instruction	Guided instruction	Collaborative learning
Lesson Plan 1 Level: Low-Level Theme: Employment Module: Following Instructions											
Lesson A: Introduction	x					x		x	x	x	
Lesson B: Development	x	x				x		x	x	x	x
Lesson Plan C: Application	x	x	x			x		x			x
Lesson Plan 2 Level: Low-Mid Level Theme: Education Module: Reading Calendars											
Lesson A: Introduction	x	x							x	x	x
Lesson B: Development	x	x				x		x	x	x	x
Lesson Plan C: Application	x		x			x		x		x	x
Lesson 3 Level: High Level Theme: Health Module: The Digestive System											
Lesson A: Introduction	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Lesson B: Development	x	x	x	x				x	x	x	x



(Peter, 2015)

Lesson Plan 1

The first lesson plan is based on the low-level literacy learner Mu. This lesson has a work focus and the real-life task at the end of the lesson plan

is to use print to follow instructions. This lesson was designed because some learners expressed interest in finding work at a local greenhouse. The instructor decided that an important element of manual labour is following instructions. To build reading skills and to increase familiarity with instructional language (i.e., the imperative), the instructor decided to make a lesson that allowed learners to develop oral skills and begin to understand that print can be used for instructional purposes.

This lesson plan demonstrates how skill instruction can be incorporated by using the complete whole-part-whole instructional approach, and includes focused instruction, guided instruction, collaborative learning, and learner self-assessment. Differentiated instruction is reflected in the use of different learning styles (e.g., kinesthetic, musical, visual) based on the preferences and interest of the majority of the learners.



(Liévano, 2014)

Lesson Plan 2

The second lesson plan is based on the low-to-mid level literacy learner Andres. This lesson has a home focus and the real-life task at the end of the lesson plan that includes reading a child's school

calendar to determine what items need to be packed for that day. This lesson was designed based on the reality that many schools use communication bags to communicate with caregivers. Every month, caregivers receive a calendar that indicates the days for the rotary classes and special events. Caregivers are required to send their children with the correct items (e.g., sneakers for gym class, money for pizza day orders, books for library day). Each subject/event

was written with one or two words, so teaching these low-to-mid level literacy learners the letter-sound cue word recognition strategy is useful in this context.

This lesson plan demonstrates how word recognition strategy instruction can be incorporated within the whole-part-whole instructional approach, and includes focused instruction, guided instruction, collaborative learning, and learner self-assessment. Differentiated instruction is planned twice in the lesson plan. In part two of this lesson plan, learners are invited to choose if they want to read the short story alone, with a partner, or to the teacher. This represents differentiating process according to learning profile. Differentiating process according to learning style is also provided at the end of the lesson as learners select extension activities from a choice board while their teacher assesses individual students' reading skills.



(Nijssen, 2013)

Lesson Plan 3

The third lesson plan is based on the high level literacy learner Adama. This lesson has an academic focus and the real-life task at the end of the lesson plan is to share the information they learned from reading a factual article. This lesson was designed

based on students' interest of internal organs and the need for learners at this level to develop skills and strategies for academic reading such as setting purposes for reading.

This lesson plan demonstrates how the comprehension strategy of setting purposes for reading can be represented by using the complete whole-part-whole instructional approach, and includes focused instruction, guided instruction, collaborative learning, and learner self-assessment. Differentiating content according to interest is provided when learners are given a choice on the organ they would like to study.

Lesson Plan 1: Overview



(Peter, 2015)

Theme: Employment

Module: Following Instructions

Time: The lesson plan is estimated to take 90 minutes to complete. Lesson plans are segmented into three, 30-minute lessons. Instructors can adjust the timing, lesson content, materials, and language to meet the needs of their learners. These lessons described here occur after routine warm-ups such as greeting each other, writing the date, or discussing the weather.

Description of the Learner

Learners are new to being in school and are not used to sitting in a seat for long periods of time. Activities are completed best when scheduled within 20-30 minute blocks. Learners are able to orient a photograph or flashcard the right way up. They have a strong need for kinesthetic and verbal exposure to language before relating it to text. They have experience making connections to photographs and videos with real people and concrete images (i.e., not videos of cartoon characters or graphic images). They are not aware of different purposes of text (e.g., text can be used to instruct, inform, persuade). These learners understand and can use the thumbs-up, thumbs-sideways, and thumbs-down rating system to express if they like doing different things in class.

Real-World Task

Work Focus: Follow instructions for planting seeds (e.g., for work at a greenhouse).

Context/Background Information

Some learners expressed interest in working at a local greenhouse because some of their peers found jobs there.

	<p>Their peers have limited English, but have enough English to follow directions for completing work tasks such as planting seeds, transplanting seedlings, watering plants, sweeping the floor, and keeping the workplace tidy. These learners need to increase their oral vocabulary and develop skills in following instructions in oral and written English.</p>
Instructional Pre-requisites	<p>These learners are new to school. They have very few literacy skills and no learning strategies. This lesson plan is early in the term.</p> <p>Learners are familiar with using photographs to recall experienced events such as a family photo to talk about children or a wedding or a classroom experience. Learners know how to orient photos the right way up. As photos in class are being used for other purposes than family memories, learners may need support in matching realia and items in photographs.</p>
CLB Competencies and Indicators (CIC, 2012a)	<p><i>Listening CLB 1: Comprehending Instructions</i></p> <p>Indicates comprehension with appropriate verbal and non-verbal responses (e.g., self-assessment thumbs-up response).</p> <p><i>Speaking CLB 1: Giving Instructions</i></p> <p>Memorizes and uses imperative forms.</p>
Primary Reading Skill/Strategy	Use photos to follow instructions.
Other Skills/Strategies	<p>Orient photograph the right way up.</p> <p>Match realia to corresponding photograph.</p> <p>Use photograph to recall an experienced event.</p>
Rationale	Learners need to develop understanding that texts can be used for a variety of purposes (e.g., to instruct, persuade, inform). Photos are at the beginning of the visual literacy

	<p>continuum and are recommended when building new concepts and skills for learners (McConnell, 2014). As learners build the awareness that print can be used to instruct, they also need to develop oral skills in the imperative grammatical structure. Through oral repetition and putting the imperative sentences in a song and incorporating mimes, learners can build awareness of this word order. ESL adult literacy learners must have the oral language before being expected to transfer it to text (Bell & Burnaby, 1983; NRP, 2000). Learners are not expected to complete tasks independently, but work collaboratively to reduce the cognitive load.</p>
Assessment Tasks	<p>Formative Assessments: Instructor observes learners and provides feedback about how well they match the oral instructions to the photograph.</p> <p>Skill-Using Assessment: In groups, learners use the photos to follow instructions for planting seeds. Observe learners while completing the task. Circulate and ask learners to point to the photo that represents the step they are working on.</p> <p>Self-Assessment: Learners use the thumbs-up, thumbs-sideways, thumbs-down rating system to indicate their enjoyment of singing and miming and of their ability to use photos to follow instructions.</p>
Lesson Plan Extension Ideas	<p>Some ideas to extend learners' knowledge about plants include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Watch a time-lapse video about the growth of seeds. ▪ Keep a record of plant growth by making a small booklet. Learners record height of plants in centimetres, and complete a drawing of the plant on a weekly basis to record changes. ▪ Walk around the neighbourhood and complete a

scavenger hunt for colours of flowers or shapes of leaves.

- Take photographs of plants in the neighbourhood to bring to class and discuss (e.g., colour, shapes, number of petals).

Some ideas to extend this skill (using photos to follow instructions) within this thematic context include:

- Follow similar lesson plans that require steps/instructions such as transplanting seeds to bigger pots, watering schedules, mixing and applying fertilizer.

Lesson Plan 1– Part A: Introduction



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First Whole: Set lesson goals



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First Whole: Build vocabulary

Lesson Objective: By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to name concrete items in photos and in a video, repeat short simple instructions, and connect oral language to actions.

Materials

Soil, seeds (e.g., marigolds, tomatoes, basil), 4” pots, small watering can.

Computer, projector, board.

Internet connection, link to video on how to plant seeds (e.g.,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c42LBeuWTCs>).

Agenda

Read agenda with learners. Clarify steps as necessary so that learners understand the skills that they will focus on today. As the lesson progresses, return to the agenda to check off what was completed and to indicate the next step. A sample agenda is as follows:

1. Say words.
2. See video.
3. Sing and do.

Lay planting items (i.e., flower pot, soil, seed packet, watering can) on the table. Pick up the seed packet and point to the picture. Say, “flowers”. Learners repeat. Open the seed packet and pour out a few seeds. Say,

Lesson Plan 1– Part A: Introduction

“seeds”. Learners repeat. Pass around a few seeds and each learner looks at them and says the word. Focus on pronunciation of all the sounds. Support learners as necessary for all the target vocabulary in forming the sounds correctly.

Point to the soil, open the bag, and take out some soil. Say, “soil”. Touch the soil, smell it, and invite learners to do the same. Learners look at the soil, smell it, say the word, and pass it around.

Point to the flower pot and say, “pot”. Pass it around and learners repeat the word.

Point to the watering can, pick it up, and demonstrate that when you pour it, water comes out. Pass the watering can to the learners. Learners repeat the word, “water,” as they pass it around.

Review all the words with the whole class by pointing to and naming each item. Learners repeat.

Explain to learners that they will watch a video about how to plant seeds in pots. Ask them to watch the video to look for the new vocabulary words. Play the video (e.g., 0:39-1:44 with the sound off of the following video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c42LBeuWTCs>) and point to the concrete items in the video and ask learners, “What is this?” Learners call out the target vocabulary.

Lesson Plan 1– Part A: Introduction



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Guided

Instruction:

Provide prompts
to recall target
vocabulary

If learners do not respond, pause the video and point to the real item. If they do not respond, provide learners with the word. Have them repeat it. Point to the video image, and have learners repeat the word. Replay the video again if necessary for learners to make connections between the target vocabulary and the video.



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Focused

Instruction:

Provide model of
oral language

Have learners watch the video clip again. This time, pause the video, mime the gesture, and say the imperative sentence for the instruction. For example, mime and say, “Pour the soil. Plant the seed. Pour the water,” depending on the actions in the video. Keep instructions simple.



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Guided

Instruction:

Remove supports

Watch the video clip again, and have learners copy the action and the imperative sentence.

Repeat the video clip several times and provide fewer supports each time. Work towards learners being able to mime and say the instruction as a whole class without teacher support. This could be done by first stopping the physical action and providing only the oral sentence or vice versa depending on the needs of the learners.

Once learners can complete the mime and say the instructions with the video with no or minimal teacher support, turn off the video.

Lesson Plan 1– Part A: Introduction



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Strategy:
Conditional
Knowledge

Strategy: Singing can be used to help students remember word order. Inform learners that sometimes they can use songs to help remember English words, or phrases using oral language that they can understand with the support of gestures. For example, “Sometimes, songs help us remember English.”

Put the instructions to a tune and do the mime to show the instructions. (For example, adapt the tune Wheels on the Bus to the instructions and sing, “Pour the soil, pour the soil, pour the soil, plant the seed, plant the seed, pour the water”).



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Guided
Instruction:
Remove supports

Invite learners to sing and mime the actions. Repeat several times. As learners get the tune, slowly remove supports by offering only the mimes, only the words, or only humming the tune based on learners’ needs.





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Assessment

Ask learners if they like singing the song and completing the actions. Use a question such as, “Do you like singing and doing?” that connects to the agenda. Have learners indicate with a thumbs-up, thumbs-sideways, or thumbs-down to inform you about their enjoyment of this learning activity. Learner feedback on this can be used to inform and adjust the remainder of this lesson or future lessons.

Lesson Plan 1– Part B: Skill/Strategy Development

		<p>Lesson Objective: By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to connect instructional steps to a photograph.</p> <p>Materials</p> <p>Soil, seeds (e.g., marigolds, tomatoes, basil), 4” pots, small watering can.</p> <p>Computer, projector, board.</p> <p>Internet connection, link to video on how to plant seeds (e.g., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c42LBeuWTCs).</p> <p>Photos of each instructional step.</p>
 <p>©Matt McInnes</p>	<p>First Whole: Set lesson goals</p>	<p>Agenda</p> <p>Read agenda with learners. Clarify steps as necessary so that learners understand the skills that they will focus on today. As the lesson progresses, return to the agenda to check off what was completed and to indicate the next step. A sample agenda is as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Say words. 2. Sing and do. 3. Read pictures.
 <p>©Matt McInnes</p>	<p>First Whole: Activate background knowledge</p>	<p>Warm-up</p> <p>Review the target vocabulary by having the real items on the table. Point to the items and ask, “What is it?”</p> <p>Learners respond. If learners do not provide a response, prompt them by saying the first sound. If learners still do not respond, tell them, and have them repeat the</p>

Lesson Plan 1– Part B: Skill/Strategy Development

		<p>word.</p> <p>Review the mime and the instructions by modelling the song and actions practised in the previous lesson. Invite learners to practise this song and mime with you.</p> <p>Remove supports by providing only the actions, or only the instructions, or only the tune until the whole class can complete activity without instructor support.</p>
 ©Matt McInnes	<p>Part: Use text (photos) for instructional purposes</p>	
 ©Matt McInnes	<p>Focused Instruction: Model skill</p>	<p>Project photographs of the instructional steps on the board. Point to the first photo. Ask learners to name the target vocabulary in the photo by pointing to the items and asking, “What it is?” Ask learners to point to the real item on the table to reinforce the skill of matching realia to corresponding photographs. Continue eliciting the target vocabulary for each of the photographs.</p>
 ©Matt McInnes	<p>Guided Instruction</p>	<p>If learners struggle recalling the vocabulary, prompt learners by providing choices such as, “Is it soil or a pot?,” pointing to the real item on the table, or telling learners the word.</p>
 ©Matt McInnes	<p>Focused Instruction: Model skill</p>	<p>Connect the photos to the instructions. Point to the photo, sing the song, and do the mime. Invite learners to participate, and point to the photo and repeat the song and mime. Repeat this several times as a whole group.</p>

Lesson Plan 1– Part B: Skill/Strategy Development



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Collaborative Learning with Guided Instruction

Divide learners into groups. Provide groups with the instructional photographs (glued in the correct order). Have groups point to the photographs, sing the song, and do the mimes. Circulate through the groups to observe oral language skill and abilities to connect the instructions to the photographs. Provide various supports as needed such as saying the instructions, demonstrating the mimes, or redirecting learners to the correct photo.

Ask that each group member take a turn pointing to the photograph, singing the song, and doing the action. Group members watch, listen, and support the individuals in their practice. Circulate again to observe and support students as needed, but also encourage group members to help their peers during this process. For example, say, “Hmmm. That didn’t sound right. Asha, what should Mu sing for that picture?”



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Assessment

Have each group present their song and mime to the whole class while pointing to the photographs. Observe learners’ skills and abilities in saying the imperatives and connecting instructions to a photograph. Provide feedback to groups and the whole class that emphasizes these skills. For example, “Good [use a thumbs-up gesture]. I see you point to the picture and sing and do.” Or, “So-so [use a thumbs-sideways gesture]. Sometimes the picture and song are not the same. Problem. Let’s do it together again.”

Lesson Plan 1– Part C: Skill/Strategy Application



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First Whole: Set lesson goals

Lesson Objective: By the end of this lesson, learners will demonstrate the ability to follow instructions when looking at print/photos.

Materials

Old newspapers, flower pots, soil, seeds, water cans, water.

Instructional photos.

Agenda

Read agenda with learners. Clarify steps as necessary so that learners understand the skills that they will focus on today. As the lesson progresses, return to the agenda to check off what was completed and to indicate the next step. A sample agenda is as follows:

1. See pictures, sing, and do.
2. Plant seeds.
3. Say OK or problem [may have a visual of thumbs-up, thumbs-sideways, thumbs-down].



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First Whole: Activate background knowledge

Warm-up

Review oral vocabulary by asking learners to name the concrete items as you hold them up.

Review the song and mime as a whole class.

Review the instructional photos as a whole class. Review

Lesson Plan 1– Part C: Skill/Strategy Application



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Second Whole:
Contextualizes
the skill in real-
life task

the vocabulary in each photo and review the song and the mime. Begin by modelling for the class what was done in the last lesson by pointing to the photograph, singing the song, and completing the action.

Learners return to their groups from the last lesson and refer to the photo sequence. Learners practise pointing to the photo, singing, and miming as a group.

Learners stay in their groups to plant seeds in class. Provide learners with the materials and show groups how you would like them to set up their space. For example, spread old newspapers on the table, and distribute the pots, seed packages, bags of soil, and watering cans.

Ask learners to refer to their photo sequence. Elicit from learners the steps that they will follow to plant their seeds. If learners do not respond, point to the first photo in the sequence and wait for learners to say the step. If they still do not respond, hum the tune for the song. If they still do not respond, tell learners the first step and sing the beginning part of the song.



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**Collaborative
Learning**

In groups, learners look at the instructions and plant their seeds. Circulate to assist learners. Ask learners to point to the photo that represents the step that they are currently doing. For example, say, “What picture?,” and learners point to the corresponding photo to reinforce the concept that text and provide instructions. Once learners have followed the instructions and

Lesson Plan 1– Part C: Skill/Strategy Application



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Assessment: Self-Assessment

planted their seeds, have learners tidy up the space.

Then, learners return to their seats.

Debrief with the whole class what they did over the past few classes. Discuss using appropriate language and terminology with learners that they learned new words (say the words), saw a video, learned a song, did some actions, and used pictures to follow instructions.

Ask learners to show with a thumbs-up, -sideways, or – down gesture how well they can use pictures to follow instructions. This self-assessment is intended to draw attention to the targeted skill and encourage learners to think about their learning.

Lesson Plan 2: Overview



(Liévano, 2014)

Theme: Education	Module: Reading Calendars
Time: The module is estimated to take 6 hours to complete. Lesson plans are segmented into three, 2-hour lessons. Instructors can adjust the timing, lesson content, materials, and language to meet the needs of their learners. The lessons described here occur after routine warm-ups such as signing in, greeting each other, or discussing daily home routines.	
Description of the Learner	<p>Learners have a small bank of sight words and understand that text has meaning. They understand that sentences are made up of words and are beginning to understand that words are made up of sounds. They understand that letters correspond with sounds, but are not able to use letter-sound patterns to decode words. They need to learn how to make educated guesses about the word using the initial letter-sound cues, the context, and their background knowledge. These learners typically fall between the CLB 1L–CLB 2L levels.</p>
Real-World Task	<p>Home Focus: Learners read a child's monthly school calendar to determine what items need to be packed for that day.</p>
Context/Background Information	<p>Teachers often provide monthly calendars to students that outline the daily schedules and specific items that children need to bring to school over a week. For example, if Monday is library day, then children should bring their library books. If Tuesday is gym, then children should bring sneakers. Caregivers are responsible for ensuring the children come to school prepared. Many of the learners in the class have</p>

	children or grandchildren in elementary school. Learners who are not responsible for caring for children could be informed that this skill could be transferred to other contexts such as reading work calendars or community event schedules.
Instructional Pre-requisites	Learners are in the middle of the term. These learners have recently studied classroom items (e.g., pencil, markers, earphones, books) and are able to name real items, match real items to pictures, and have read highly scaffolded stories that include images and very simple text. These learners are familiar with calendars and have some practise using them. For example, the instructor may have incorporated a calendar as part of daily lessons to recognize calendar format and concepts of past, present, and future. Learners have completed choice board activities independently. Learners have used self-ratings for classroom activities using the traffic-light colour coding system to indicate yes, so-so, and no.
CLB Competencies and Indicators (CIC, 2012a)	<p><i>Listening CLB 2: Comprehending Instructions</i></p> <p>Understand short, simple instructions, responds verbally by answering questions or with physical activity.</p> <p><i>Speaking CLB 2: Sharing Information</i></p> <p>Give basic descriptions of concrete, familiar objects in a few short words or phrases.</p> <p><i>Reading CLB 1: Getting Things Done</i></p> <p>Get information from simple formatted text (i.e., a calendar), respond to a reading with physical activity.</p>
Primary Reading Skill/Strategy	Word Recognition: read words by using initial letter-sound cues, context, and background knowledge.
Other	Activate background knowledge, make predictions, and

Skills/Strategies	check predictions.
Rationale	<p>Learners need to develop word analysis skills (i.e., phonics). These learners have not yet developed an internal representation of letter-sound correspondence and they do not have these skills to transfer from their first language to English. Providing learners with explicit instruction that includes the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge about using letter-sound cues to guess words in context increases word recognition and can lead to learners becoming proficient and independent readers (Almasi & Fullerton, 2012). The context of the word is emphasized in these lessons in order to have learners focus on meaning-making and self-monitoring while building their phonics skills (Almasi & Fullerton, 2012). Using letter-sound cues is a reliable means of decoding unknown words as long as the word is in their oral vocabulary.</p>
Assessment Tasks	<p>Formative Feedback: Instructor provides ongoing formative feedback on strategy use (e.g., focus on what learners should continue to do, what they need to do more of, what they might consider doing, and what they should stop doing).</p> <p>Self-Assessment: Learners assess their confidence in using the strategy.</p> <p>Skill-Using Assessment: Learners read a calendar and pack the physical items in a real backpack.</p>
Lesson Plan Extension Ideas	<p>Some ideas to extend their knowledge about elementary school activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read and fill in a pizza day order form. ▪ Read and fill in modified field trip permission forms. ▪ Read December or March Break holiday activity calendars.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read community calendars to find local events like movies, public skating, and free swims. ▪ Use modified flyers to find back-to-school sales or compare prices for new running shoes or other school supplies. <p>Some ideas to extend this strategy (letter-sound cues) within this instructional context include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Games such as the fly swatter game or BINGO. ▪ Collaboratively read a letter from the school that lists items caregivers need to provide for children. ▪ Collaboratively or independently read a short story on the topic that includes familiar oral vocabulary. <p>For example, see Bow Valley College's (2010) <i>Deng Starts School</i> reader at https://esl-literacy.com/readers/phase1/initial/deng_starts_school.html.</p>
Sources	<p>The declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge presented in this lesson plan is adapted from Almasi and Fullerton (2012).</p>

Lesson Plan 2 – Part A: Introduction

Lesson Objective: By the end of this lesson, learners will connect initial letters to sounds to identify words and complete highly patterned sentences. Learners will rate their confidence in using the initial letter-sound cue strategy.

Materials:

5 real items that children are required to bring to school on certain days of the week (e.g., library books, running shoes, markers, money for pizza lunch, ear phones).

5 large realistic, colour images of elementary school subjects or events (e.g., art, gym, computers, library, pizza day).

Set of school subject/event images for groups.

Set of word cards for school subjects/events.

Sentence and phrase strips.

2 dry erase markers of different colour.

Tape or magnets to stick large image cards and phrase strips to the white board.

Wall pocket.

Find Someone Who activity sheet with target vocabulary.

Instructor-made self-assessment sheet.



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**First Whole: Set
lesson goals**

Agenda

Read agenda with learners. Clarify steps as necessary so that learners understand the skills that they will focus

Lesson Plan 2 – Part A: Introduction

on today. As the lesson progresses, return to the agenda to check off what was completed and to indicate the next step. A sample agenda is as follows:

1. See pictures and say words.
2. Match letters and sounds.
3. Make sentences.
4. Think about learning.



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First Whole:
Activate
background
knowledge

Warm-up

Lay out real and familiar classroom objects (e.g., earphones, markers, sneakers, money, books) that learners have studied already. Discuss with learners what children need to bring to school. Learners can think of their own children or other children they know such as nieces, nephews, or neighbours. Learners who had prior schooling could think about their own experiences. Ask learners what children need to bring every day (e.g., lunch, backpack, important bag) and what they sometimes need to bring (e.g., earphones, sneakers, etc.).



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Build Vocabulary

Guide the conversation towards why students sometimes need to bring different items to school on certain days of the week (e.g., earphones for computer class, sneakers for gym). For example, hold up an item such as earphones, and ask learners, “When do children bring earphones to school?” Wait for learner response and provide the target vocabulary (e.g., computers) if necessary.

Lesson Plan 2 – Part A: Introduction



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**Focused
Instruction:
Provide model of
oral language**

Show a realistic, colour image (e.g., from clip art or a free image site such as <http://pixabay.com>) that represents the school subjects (e.g., computers, gym, library, art, pizza day). Discuss visual elements in the images to ensure that learners understand the focus of the picture and can name any concrete and familiar items within the picture. Discuss the school subjects and draw on learners' knowledge and prior experiences of school and school subjects (e.g., from their own learning experiences, or what they know about their children or other family members).

Match the familiar school item to the school subject/event image. Say some sentences while pointing to the images and the real items. For example, say, "Today is computer class. My child needs earphones. Today is art class. My child needs markers. Today is pizza day. My child needs money. Today is library. My child needs books. Today is gym. My child needs sneakers."

Learners repeat each sentence. Learners practise sentences several times with decreasing instructor support. For example, after learners repeat the sentences a few times, say the subject and verb only and have learners complete the sentences, "Today is ..., My child needs...". Remove all prompts and have the whole class repeat the sentences chorally.

Lesson Plan 2 – Part A: Introduction



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Guided
Instruction:
Provide
scaffolding to
recall target
vocabulary

Divide learners into small groups. Give groups their own sets of image cards in random order, and have them say the sentences (e.g., “Today is art. My child needs markers”) with each other. Observe and support as necessary. If individuals struggle with recalling the target vocabulary, encourage group members to assist each other. If they cannot recall, then provide learners with initial sound. If they still cannot recall, then provide learners with the word.



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Part: Provide
explicit strategy
instruction

As a whole class, return to the large image cards. Stick image cards to the board. Ask groups to lay out small picture cards on their desks in the same order as items appear on the board (e.g., left to right or top to bottom). Orally review each word.



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Focused
Instruction:
Model strategy

Inform learners that they will practice reading these words together. Looking at the first picture (e.g., computers), write the word on a phrase strip and stick it under the picture. Say the word.



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Strategy:
Declarative
knowledge

Review the concept with learners that words are comprised of letters and the letters represent sounds and point out various features of the word. For example say, “We know that words have letters. Let’s read the letters.” The whole class reads the letters as the teacher points to each letter. “We also know that letters have sounds. Listen to the sounds in *computers*”. Pronounce the word clearly and deliberately emphasize all the phonemes (e.g., /k/ /ə/ /m/ /p/ /ju:/ /t/ /z:/ /z/) while pointing to each sound in the word. Repeat.

Lesson Plan 2 – Part A: Introduction



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Strategy: Procedural knowledge

Direct learners' attention to the first sound. Inform learners that they can look at the first letter of a word and think about its sound. For example, say, "This word begins with a /k/ sound. Other words begin with /k/. What are some other words that begin with /k/?" Learners orally list other words that begin with the sound. These words could be in their first language as the instructional emphasis is on recognizing the initial consonant.



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Strategy: Conditional knowledge

Inform learners that by thinking about the words in their spoken vocabulary they can make guesses about the written word and this can help them understand what they are reading. For example, "When we see a new word, we can look at the first letter and think about the sound. But we know many words that begin with that sound. We can think about the context/topic that we are reading about. Today, we know we are reading about classes that children have at school. We know some words for the subjects that children have at school. I see this word begins with a 'c', and the sound is /k/. I can think about all the /k/ words I know for school subjects. I guess that this word says 'computers'." Continue this procedure for all the school subject/event words with heavy repetition of the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge for using the letter-sound cue strategy.

Lesson Plan 2 – Part A: Introduction



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Guided Instruction

Invite groups to look at the provided image cards. Provide groups with printed words on small cards. Ask learners to spread the word cards on the table. Ask learners to find the word “computers”. Remind learners that they can think of the first sound of the word. For example, say, “Please find computers. What sound does *computers* begin with?” Wait for learners to respond. If learners do not respond or respond inaccurately, isolate the first sound. Ask learners, “I hear the /k/ sound at the beginning of ‘computers’. What letter makes the /k/ sound?” If needed, tell learners that ‘c’ makes the /k/ sound. Learners match the word card to the picture card.

Observe as groups locate the word and provide supports as necessary. If groups struggle, prompt them to focus on the initial sound of the word, connect it to a letter, and try to find the word card that begins with that letter. If learners struggle with this, tell them the first letter and point to the letter on an alphabet poster in the class.

Repeat and continue with the remaining target vocabulary.



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Assessment: Self- assessment

Ask learners to talk with their group about how they found the words. Circulate and listen to explanations. Prompt learners to draw on the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge explained above. Call on groups to share their ideas, and ensure that the focus

Lesson Plan 2 – Part A: Introduction



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Part: Provide
explicit
instruction

remains on the use of strategic knowledge by asking questions such as, “Did you look at the first letter of the word? Did you think of the sound? Did you think about the context? Did you think about the words you know in that context?”



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Focused
Instruction:
Modelling
sentence
formation using
a think-aloud

Explain that as students come to know the meaning of these words and gain practice reading words by looking at the first letter and thinking about its sound and context, they can make sentences with them.

Write a sentence starter (e.g., *Today is*) on a sentence strip and place it in a wall pocket. Point to the words and read from left to right. Engage in a think-aloud to model the thought processes for selecting a word to complete the sentence. For example, the think-aloud could progress as follows:

“I have the beginning of a sentence on the board. My sentence says, ‘Today is ...’. I want to my sentence to read, ‘Today is *computers*’. I have to find the word *computers*.”



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Strategy: Review
of declarative,
procedural, and
conditional
knowledge as
part of the think-
aloud

“I remember that words are made up of letters, and letters have sounds. I need to think about the first sound of ‘computers’. What is the first sound?” Have students say it. If they struggle, then isolate the initial sound for them and ask them again.

“The word *computers* begins with a /k/ sound. /k/ is the letter ‘c’. So thinking about the spoken word and the first sound, I can guess what word is, *computers*. I need to

Lesson Plan 2 – Part A: Introduction

look for a word that begins with the letter ‘c’ because that letter makes the /k/ sound. I have to find a word that begins with a ‘c’. Okay, I see one. This word says *computers*”.

Point to the letter ‘c’ and say /k/. Pronounce the word clearly and deliberately emphasizing all the phonemes (e.g., /k/ /ə/ /m/ /p/ /ju:/ /t/ /ɜ:/ /z/) while pointing to each sound in the word.

Place the word on the phrase strip in the wall pocket to complete the sentence starter.

Read the sentence again.

Repeat the think-aloud process with the other word cards by placing the new word on top of the word in the wall pocket.



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**Collaborative
Learning**

Learners copy the sentence starter in their notebooks or binders. With a partner, learners work to build sentences using the modelled example. Learners physically move their own word cards to replace each school subject/event in the sentence and take turns reading aloud to their partner.



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**with
Guided
Instruction as
required**

Circulate to ensure that learners are saying the correct words when reading sentences orally. Ask learners to explain how they identified their words prompting learners to include the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge for using letter-sound cues to read new words. For example, ask, “What is that word?”

Lesson Plan 2 – Part A: Introduction



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Collaborative Learning

How do you know it is ...?” If learners are struggling with reading the words, prompt learners to look at the first letter, think of the sound, think of the context, and think of the words known orally. For example, say, “Did you look at the first letter? What sound is that letter? What school subject begins with that sound?” If learners still struggle, model the procedure again or tell the learner the word.

Make anecdotal notes about learners’ reading and use of this strategy to inform future lessons.

Provide learners with a *Find Someone Who* activity (i.e., a T-chart with one column that has the sentence starter such as “Does your child [or niece or neighbour] have ... today?” with words listed in rows below. The other column is titled ‘name’ so learners can write classmates’ names). Inform learners that they are going to practise reading these words and asking questions. Explain the activity and the layout of the T-chart. Learners stand up, walk around, and ask five different classmates the question at the top of the handout. If the classmate says “yes”, learners ask the classmate to spell his or her name. Learners write the name beside the item. Once learners have completed this activity, learners return to their seats. Take up the handout by asking learners to identify classmates for each item. “Andres, whose child has *art* today?”

Lesson Plan 2 – Part A: Introduction



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Assessment

Provide learners with a teacher-made self-assessment sheet. To focus on target vocabulary recognition, the self-assessment can include the photo images used earlier in the lesson with the statement, “I can say...” with a traffic light colour-coding system to indicate yes, so-so, or no. To focus on strategy use, the self-assessment can include the list of words with the statement, “I can use the first letter to read...” followed by the printed words with the same self-rating system. Collect these self-assessments to inform modifications for future lessons.

Wrap-up

Ask learners to think of their children or a child that they know and what subject/event the children had at school today. Learners think and find the word card. Going around the classroom, learners provide a verbal sentence with the target item and hold up the word card (e.g., “Today, my child had library”).

Lesson Plan 2 – Part B: Skill/Strategy Development

Lesson Objective: By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to use and verbalize the letter-sound cue strategy to read words in a calendar and a short story with some support.

Materials:

5 large realistic, colour images of elementary school subjects or events (e.g., art, gym, computers, library, pizza day).

5 real items that children are required to bring to school on certain days of the week (e.g., library books, running shoes, markers, money for pizza lunch, ear phones).

Large image card for each item.

Small image card and word card for each school subject/event.

2 sample weekly calendars (one to project on the board, one to provide as a handout to groups).

Computer, projector.

Markers and white board.



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First Whole: Set lesson goals

Agenda

Read agenda with learners. Clarify steps as necessary so that learners understand the skills that they will focus on today. As the lesson progresses, return to the agenda to check off what was completed and to indicate the next step. A sample agenda is as follows:

Lesson Plan 2 – Part B: Skill/Strategy Development

1. Review words
2. Read a calendar
3. Tell a story, copy the story
4. Read the story
5. Self-assessment



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First Whole:
Activates prior
knowledge

Warm-up

Return the self-assessments collected at the end of the previous lesson. Remind learners about what they practised in the previous lesson. For example, say “Yesterday, we learned five new words, and we practised reading the words by looking at the first letter. Then we thought about the sound of the first letter. We thought about the context and the words we already know in that context. At the end of class, you did a self-assessment. I read them. I will return them now.” Learners review their self-assessments and file it in their binders.



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First Whole:
Review
vocabulary and
strategy review

As a whole class, review oral vocabulary for school subjects/events. Hold up the image of the school subject/event and ask learners, “What is it?” Ask learners what the first sound is. Invite a learner to point to the letter on a classroom alphabet poster.

Ask learners to take out the picture and word cards from the previous lesson. Have small groups work to match the pictures and the words. Ask groups how they matched them so they can recall and verbalize the

Lesson Plan 2 – Part B: Skill/Strategy Development



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Part: Model the
strategy



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Focused
Instruction:
Think-aloud.



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Strategy: Review
of declarative,
procedural, and
conditional
knowledge

strategy. Prompt learners to include the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge for using letter-sound cues. For example, ask questions such as, “How did you know that word was *computers*? What is the first letter of this word? What sound does it make?”

On the board, project one week of an elementary class calendar. Inform the class that they are going to look at the calendar to see what the child needs to bring on the different days. Point to the familiar, real objects on the table (e.g., markers, sneakers, money, earphones, books).

Point to the first day. Say the day of the week and the date [point to the number to review how to know the date]. Point to the school subject/event word. Say, “Today is Monday, October 3, 2016. I see there is a word on the calendar. This tells me that something important is happening this day. I know this is a school calendar, so I know the context of these words. I know that the word will tell me something that is important for my child to remember about school on that day. I do not know this word, but I know that I can guess what the word is. I will look at the first letter of the word. The first letter is ‘g’. I know ‘g’ makes the sound /j/. Hmm. The word ‘gym’ begins with the /j/ sound. I think this word is ‘gym’. Now, what does my child need on gym day? Oh yes, she needs sneakers [point to the sneakers]. I will pack my child’s sneakers.” [Pick up the sneakers and put them in the backpack.]

Lesson Plan 2 – Part B: Skill/Strategy Development



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Guided
Instruction:
Focus learners’
attention on
parts of the task

Continue the think-aloud with the next day (Tuesday).

On the third day in the calendar (Wednesday), invite learners to help you read the calendar, determine the school subject/event, and decide what to pack. For example, say, “Ok. Now you can help me. Let’s look at Wednesday. What is the date?” Wait for responses. If learners do not respond, point to the number in the calendar box. Learners read the number. Repeat the whole date. “So, what do we do now?” Wait for learners to identify the word in the box on the calendar, and use the first letter to guess the word. If learners do not respond, say, “I see a word here” [Point to the word.] “I do not know what this says. Who can help me? What do I need to do?” Wait for a learner to share how to figure out the word by looking at the first letter, considering the context, and guessing the word. Invite a learner to come up to the front to pack the real item in the backpack for that day. Continue with the remaining two days.



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Collaborative
Learning

Divide learners into trios. Provide learners with week of the calendar. Provide learners with images of the classroom items. Learners read the calendar together and match the classroom item to the day to indicate what item needs to be placed in the backpack.



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with Guided
Instruction

Circulate around the class to observe learners’ understanding of use the letter-sound cue strategy. Ask

Lesson Plan 2 – Part B: Skill/Strategy Development



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Whole: Links the parts back together

groups to explain the process for reading the word. Provide prompts and questions as needed (e.g., “What is the first letter? What sound does it make? What school words begin with that letter?”).

Take up. Ask different groups to tell the class what item they packed for various days of the week. All groups should have the same items. If some groups have different answers, ask them to explain their choice, and clarify as necessary.

Tell learners that they will look at the calendar and tell a story. Ask learners to think about the sentences and vocabulary that they already practised in class yesterday and today. Tell learners that you will copy down what they say, and practise reading it together. Start learners off by saying, for example, “Today is Monday. My child has gym. She needs sneakers.” Write this on the board. Invite learners to look at the calendar and tell you more sentences to write. Copy what learners say on the board.



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Guided Instruction

Point to and read each word of the story dictated by the learners.

Invite learners to join in choral reading of the story. Continue pointing to each word. If you notice that learners make mistakes, stop and focus on the word. Provide scaffolding as necessary such as asking learners to reread the word, pointing to the initial letter and

Lesson Plan 2 – Part B: Skill/Strategy Development



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Differentiation of Process according to Learning Profile

asking them to name the letter and say the sound, then guess the word in context.

Learners practice using choral reading until the reading begins to sound fluent.

Learners copy the story in their notebooks.

After learners have copied the story, invite learners to practise reading it. Invite learners to select if they prefer to read the story independently, with the person sitting next to them, or with you.

Circulate while learners read to offer guided instruction if necessary by reinforcing the strategic processes through asking questions and focusing learners' attention on the strategic processes.



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Assessment: Formative feedback

Instructor-focused reading assessment. Sit with learners while they are reading alone or with a partner and monitor their reading. Selection of learners could be random (e.g., selecting names on popsicle sticks) or pre-planned based on an instructor-designed schedule.

Monitor learners' reading skills and types of miscues. Possibly conduct a running record of learners' reading performance.

Offer immediate feedback to these learners about their reading and your observation of their use of the letter-sound cue strategy. For example, say, "You read that well. I saw that you did not know the word 'earphones', but that you looked at the first letter, and then guessed

Lesson Plan 2 – Part B: Skill/Strategy Development



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Assessment: Self-Assessment

the correct word. This was good because using the first letter and knowing the context can help us make guesses about the words. I saw you do this.”

Think-pair-share. Invite learners to find a partner. Ask them individually to think about how they read the new words today. What did they do? Did they look at the first letter? Did they think about the letter sound? Did they guess the word based on the context? Did this help them? Would they like to practise this more?

Give learners 2-3 minutes to think about their answers, and about 5 minutes to share their ideas with a partner. After, ask partners to share their ideas with the class.

Lesson Plan 2 – Part C: Skill/Strategy Application

Lesson Objective: By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to demonstrate use of letter-sound cue strategy when reading a monthly school calendar by appropriately packing a backpack.

Materials:

5 real school items that children are required to bring to school on certain days of the week (e.g., library books, running shoes, markers, money for pizza lunch, ear phones).

School calendar that connects to the short story.

Computer, projector.

Partner cloze calendar.

Choice Board tasks.

Assessment calendar and rubric.



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First Whole: Set lesson goals

Agenda

Read agenda with learners. Clarify steps as necessary so that learners understand the skills that they will focus on today. As the lesson progresses, return to the agenda to check off what was completed and to indicate the next step. A sample agenda is as follows:

1. Review story.
2. Read new story.
3. Read calendars.
4. Calendar Reading Assessment.

Lesson Plan 2 – Part C: Skill/Strategy Application



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First Whole:

Review
vocabulary



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Guided
Instruction



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Strategy: Review
procedural and
conditional
knowledge

Warm-up / Review

Rewrite or project the learner-dictated story from yesterday on the board. Review the story as a whole class. Invite learners to engage in choral reading of the story. Repeat several times.

Then, erase the school subject/event words, and erase the classroom item words and write a blank line. Inform learners that now you are changing the story. Invite learners to help you fill in the blanks.

Remind learners that when we read, if we see a word that we do not know, we can make guesses about that word. Elicit from learners the steps involved in making informed guesses using letter-sound cues (e.g., look at the letter, think of the sound, think of the context, guess the word).

Ask learners to orally read the first three sentences (e.g., Today is Monday. My child has art. She needs ____.” If learners struggle with the target vocabulary, provide scaffolding by asking learners to stop. Ask learners what they need to do when they do not know a word (i.e., provide verbal direction). If they still cannot read a word, focus learners’ attention to specific parts of the strategy (e.g., say, “Look at the first letter”, etc.). Then ask learners to complete the sentence by saying what school item is needed on that day. Write the word in the blank.

Continue with this procedure for the remaining sentences until all the blanks are filled in.

Lesson Plan 2 – Part C: Skill/Strategy Application



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Collaborative Learning

Do choral reading with the whole class once, and then have the class read the whole story a few times. Provide immediate verbal feedback about the reading skills of the whole group. Point out accurate use of the letter-sound cue strategy, and if there were mistakes, identify them and inform learners what they could do to correct the mistakes (e.g., by using the strategy).

Divide learners into small groups. Project two weekly calendars on the board (e.g., Week A, Week B). Ask groups to look at the two calendars and decide which one matches the new story. Learners discuss the story and the calendar.

Ask groups to write on a mini whiteboard which week (e.g., A or B) they think represents the one in the story. Groups hold up their boards to give a quick picture of their understanding. If a group selects the incorrect week, ask them to explain why they chose that one. Listen to their response and guide them to understand why the other week was the correct choice. For example, focus learners' attention on matching the day and the subject, or have another group attempt to explain the correct choice.



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Collaborative Learning

Provide learners with a partner cloze handout (e.g., shows 1 or more weeks of a school calendar with opposite subjects/events blanked out). Explain the task to the learners indicating that they will need to ask their partner for the school subject/event for the days

Lesson Plan 2 – Part C: Skill/Strategy Application

that have no words. Provide learners with a question that they can use such as “What subject is on Monday, October 17?” Write the question on the board for learners to refer to during this activity. The handout contains the missing words at the bottom of the page. Learners cut out the words at the bottom of the page and wait for the next part of the task.

Partners ask each other the questions, listen to their responses, find the correct word card, and place/glue it on the page.



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Second Whole:
Contextualize in
real-life practice

As a whole class, take up the activity. Ask questions such as “What subject is on Monday, October 17? What does your child need?” For the first two dates, model for learners the action of reading the calendar and putting the real item in a backpack. Ask learners to read the remaining dates and items and invite learners to come up and put the items in the backpack. Provide feedback to learners as needed such as redirecting learners to other items if they select the incorrect one to place in the backpack. Offer praise for learners who select the correct item.



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Assessment

Inform learners that they will now be assessed on their reading of the calendar and which items to bring using a new calendar. Work with individual learners to assess their skill in reading an elementary school calendar and being able to identify and pack the correct school items

Lesson Plan 2 – Part C: Skill/Strategy Application



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Differentiation of
Process: Choice in
extension
activities
according to
learning profile

for the correct day. For example, have learners identify five different dates, read corresponding subject/event, select appropriate items and place them in the backpack. Score the assessment immediately and provide feedback connected to the strategy use to each learner. Provide learners with the assessment sheet for their binders.

Choice Board: While you are busy with individual assessments, other learners can work on related tasks that are available in the choice board. Whatever activities are provided in the choice board must have been pre-taught so learners are utilizing skills that they can use independently. Sample activities include doing a word search for the target vocabulary, have a list of the school subjects and cutting out corresponding school items from flyers, filling the blanks in a story such as the one practised earlier in this lesson plan, practising a spelling strategy.

Wrap-Up

Thank the learners for doing their assessments. Provide whole-group feedback about how they did.

Ask learners to tell a partner something that they learned over the last three days.



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Assessment

Lesson Plan 3: Overview



(Nijssen, 2013)

Theme: Health	Module: The Digestive System
Time: The lesson plan is estimated to take 4 hours to complete. Lesson plans are segmented into two, 2-hour lessons. Instructors can adjust the timing, lesson content, materials, and language to meet the needs of their learners. These lessons described here occur after routine warm-ups.	
Description of the Learner	<p>Learners are transitioning into the 'reading to learn' phase.</p> <p>Learners have some reading strategies and typically need reminders about when and where to use them. With guidance, they are occasionally able to select a strategy from their repertoire to use during reading tasks. They are able to follow guided strategy processes such as a think-aloud. With guidance, they can refer to past notes in their binders to locate prior tasks and written procedures for strategies that can support the transfer of strategic practices to new tasks.</p> <p>These learners have successfully used the strategy of activating background knowledge as a pre-reading activity and are able to share what they know about topics. They have not yet practised expressing what they want to learn about the topic, what they learned after reading a text, or what they still want to learn after reading a text.</p>
Real-World Task	<p>School Focus: Learners read an information text to find information and share their learning with classmates.</p>
Context/Background Information	<p>Some ESL adult literacy learners have a goal of attending college/university in Canada. In order to work towards this goal, ESL adult literacy learners must develop many academic skills and strategies that will lead them to being self-regulated learners in an environment that requires the use of language and literacy skills to</p>

	comprehend and articulate new content. The strategy of setting a purpose for reading is an important strategy for planning learning, and encouraging learners to reflect before beginning a task rather than diving in unprepared (Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, Robbins, 1999). This strategy can also be transferred to other skills such as setting a purpose for listening to a lecture, an interview, or a radio program.
Instructional Pre-requisites	These learners are familiar with the concept that the body has internal systems (e.g., digestive system, respiratory system, reproductive system). Learners are familiar with and have practised activating background knowledge as a pre-reading strategy in focused instruction, guided instruction, and collaborative learning activities. For example, they may have activated background knowledge about a newspaper article by reading the title, looking at pictures and the captions. Learners have used self-ratings for classroom activities such as the fist to five rating system.
CLB Competencies and Indicators (CIC, 2012a)	<p><i>Listening CLB 4: Comprehending Information and Comprehending Instructions</i></p> <p>Understand short narrative communication (i.e., a think-aloud) and identifies what, how, and why.</p> <p>Understand sequentially presented instructions for strategy use and responds with appropriate actions.</p> <p><i>Speaking CLB 4: Sharing Information</i></p> <p>Give brief descriptions of experiences related to setting purposes for seeing a doctor and for reading.</p> <p><i>Reading CLB 4: Comprehending Information</i></p> <p>Understand key information and some details in simple short texts related to personally relevant topics.</p> <p>Identifies key information and specific details (e.g., who, what, where, when).</p>
Primary Reading Skill/Strategy	Setting purposes for reading.
Other Skills/Strategies	Activating background knowledge.

Rationale	<p>ESL adult literacy learners require explicit instruction in the use of reading strategies and this includes providing information around the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge for each strategy. Gaps in background knowledge can impede comprehension more than unfamiliar language structures (Carrell, 1994; cited in Tindall & Nisbett, 2010) so starting with this strategy as an initial step of setting purposes for reading can lessen the cognitive load of trying to apply the new strategy while reading a new text. Providing modelling through a think-aloud for forming questions and reading a text with questions in mind can support learners in developing their awareness of how to use this strategy.</p>
Assessment Tasks	<p>Formative Assessment: Observation, prompting for verbalization of strategy use.</p> <p>Self-Assessment: Fist to Five self-confidence rating in perceived ability to use the strategy in a group, think-pair-share about the what, how, and why of setting purposes for reading.</p>
Lesson Plan Extension Ideas	<p>This lesson plan ends when learners are beginning to self-assess and self-reflect on their use of the setting purposes for reading strategy. They practised this strategy in small groups in guided instruction and collaborative learning situations. Learners need more practice with using this strategy before they can add it to their repertoire of independently used strategies.</p> <p>Some ideas to extend their knowledge about parts of the digestive system include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners share their digestive system information in a jigsaw activity. ▪ Learners use the internet to find answers to any outstanding questions. ▪ Groups prepare an oral presentation (e.g., poster presentation, Power Point presentation) on their part of the digestive system. Listeners can use a graphic organizer to record new information which could be assessed for listening skills. This could also be followed by the I-You-We

	<p>Checklist that involves self- and peer-evaluation.</p> <p>Some ideas to extend this strategy within this instructional context include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners apply this reading strategy to reading information about a new internal organ system (e.g., the respiratory system, the reproductive system) in a jigsaw reading activity. Content could be differentiated according to readiness (e.g., articles written at different levels)
Sources	<p>The declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge presented in this lesson plan is adapted from Almasi and Fullerton (2012).</p>

Lesson Plan 3 – Part A: Introduction



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**First Whole: Set
lesson goals**

Lesson Objective: By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to collaboratively activate background knowledge and set purposes for reading.

Materials

White board, markers.

Chart paper, markers.

Agenda

Read agenda with learners. Clarify steps as necessary so that learners understand the skills that they will focus on today. As the lesson progresses, return to the agenda to check off what was completed and to indicate the next step. A sample agenda is as follows:

1. Think about setting purposes
2. Activate background knowledge about the digestive system
3. Watch how to set purposes for reading
4. Set purposes for reading in a group
5. Think about how you did with this



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First Whole:
**Connect to learners’
experiences,
activate background
knowledge**

Warm-up

Ask learners what are some reasons that people might go to see the doctor. As the whole class brainstorms their ideas, write them on the board.



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Focused Instruction

Explain that just as people may have different purposes for going to see a doctor, people may have different purposes when reading. Explain that, “Sometimes it can be helpful to

Lesson Plan 3 – Part A: Introduction



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Strategy: Review of declarative knowledge

prepare a list of symptoms or issues to discuss with the doctor before going to ensure that say everything we'd like to say and that we have answers for everything we would like to have answers for. The same can be said for reading. We can make a list before we read about things that we would like to know. When we set purposes before we read something we are making a plan for reading, just as we are making a plan for talking to the doctor. These purposes can help us focus our attention while reading, or during the appointment."



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Strategy: Review of procedural knowledge

Pre-Reading Strategy: Activate Background Knowledge
Inform learners that, "Before we read it is useful to activate background knowledge. Let's think about times in class that we activated background knowledge before we read something [pause and allow learners time to respond. If they do not respond, provide prompts or cues that will assist them in recalling the last few opportunities]. Let's think about the how we activated background knowledge. What are some things that we did or things that we looked at? [Wait for learners to respond. If learners do not respond, prompt them by asking them to refer back to their binders to a specific date that this activity was done. Have learners refer to past notes and provide additional prompts and cues to have them make suggestions such as looking at pictures, titles, and captions, thinking about what you already know about the topic, making a list]. Tell me how we activate background knowledge, and I will write your ideas on the board." Write the ideas on the board and guide and prompt learners as needed. Learners can refer to this list of ideas during the next part of the lesson.

Lesson Plan 3 – Part A: Introduction



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Strategy: Review of declarative knowledge

Remind learners of the importance of activating background knowledge by saying, “Now that we remember how to activate our background knowledge, I want you to tell me why we do this. [Wait for response. If none is provided, prompt learners to refer back to specific past tasks that involved using this strategy as learners would have made notes or self-assessments on this strategy and how it helped them with a reading task. Some examples of responses include that thinking about what you already know about the topic can help you understand new information, it is important to make connections between what you know and the new ideas in the text].

Inform learners that because they have practised activating background knowledge before (as in previous references) that now they will do this with small groups (i.e., collaboratively). They will brainstorm their background knowledge about one part of the digestive system.



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Differentiated Instruction: Differentiating Content by Interest

Inform learners that they can select the part of the digestive system that they want to study, but that groups must be roughly even. Hold up a paper with the name of the digestive system part. Tell the learners the organs (e.g., mouth, esophagus, small intestine, intestine, liver, pancreas, gall bladder, appendix, rectum), and place the papers at different areas of the classroom. [Choose a number of organs that works for the number of learners in your class to have learners work in groups of 4-5 people]. Learners move to the paper of interest to form groups.

[Note: Depending on the levels of your learners, you may opt instead to differentiate content by readiness by assigning learners to groups based on their reading skills and adapting the text to their reading level].

Lesson Plan 3 – Part A: Introduction



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**Collaborative
Practice with
Guided Instruction
as required**



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**Strategy: Categorize
ideas that were
activated during a
brainstorm of ideas.**



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**Assessment:
Observation and
prompting for
evidence of strategy
use**



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**Part: Explicit
Strategy Instruction**



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Focused Instruction



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**Strategy:
Conditional
Knowledge**

Have groups begin to brainstorm everything they know about the part of the digestive system that they selected. As groups work on this brainstorming task, circulate as necessary to provide scaffolded instruction or supports as necessary (e.g., focus learners' attention to the task, clarify what learners have said by repeating it as a question, model how to brainstorm).

After groups have several ideas listed, remind them that it can be useful to categorize their ideas into themes. This helps learners make connections between ideas. Provide groups with time for them to group their ideas into categories.

Ask that groups write their ideas on chart paper and say that groups will be expected to present their ideas later.

Groups present their ideas and categories to the class. Observe and prompt groups to share their thinking processes for making this list and categorizing their ideas (e.g., "Why did you place ___ in the ___ category? What steps did your group use while activating your background knowledge?")

Strategy: Setting Purposes for Reading

Inform learners that, "Now you will observe how to set purposes for reading, just like we set purposes for going to the doctor's office".

Provide strategy knowledge as follows:

"At the beginning of class, we talked about how before going to the doctor, it can be a good idea to write a list of questions to ask the doctor. This helps us focus the

Lesson Plan 3 – Part A: Introduction



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Strategy:
Procedural
Knowledge

Declarative
Knowledge

Procedural
Knowledge



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Model/Think-aloud

conversation and make sure that we leave the appointment with the information we wanted. Planning questions before reading can help us focus our attention while reading. We read to find answers to the questions we made.

“Making questions, or setting purposes for reading, can be done a few ways. Today we have done the first step. We have thought about what we already know about some parts of the digestive system.

“By starting with what we already know, you already have some ideas in your mind about the topic, so it can be a little bit easier to read.

“After thinking about what we already know, we can think about things that we would like to learn, that we might have questions about. Sometimes, it helps to write down the questions. We are going to do this today”.

Engage in a think-aloud such as:

“I will show you how I use the strategy of setting purposes for reading by telling you my thoughts. I will do a think-aloud. Just as you made a poster that shows your categorized list of brainstormed ideas, I also made a categorized list of what I already know about the esophagus [prepared in advance]. You can see from this list that I know that the esophagus is a tube that brings food from the mouth to the stomach. I also know about some parts that are connected to the esophagus. I know that the esophagus is a tube that connects the mouth to the stomach. I know that there is a valve at the top because it is beside the wind pipe. The wind pipe opens for breathing, and the esophagus opens for swallowing. I know that at the bottom of the esophagus there is also a valve because my husband

Lesson Plan 3 – Part A: Introduction

sometimes gets heartburn. This is when there is a burning feeling in the chest when the acid from the stomach moves up through the valve into the esophagus. I know that this is a problem from my husband and he has to take special medicine. This is what I know.

“But, I do have some questions. I wonder how the food moves through the esophagus – does it just fall down with the force of gravity, or is there something inside the esophagus like muscles or something else that helps the food move? I remember as a kid, my parents always telling me to eat while sitting up and not while lying down. Was this something to do with the esophagus and how food travels through it? I don’t know. I would like to find out more about this so I am going to write down my question: [write on the board] How does food move through the esophagus?

“I also know that the mouth and the stomach have liquids that help break food down into smaller pieces. I wonder if the esophagus also has liquid or if it is dry. I would like to know this as well. I will write this question down too: [write on the board] Does the esophagus have liquid in it? OK, do I have any more questions.... [Look at the list of background knowledge and read it out]. No, I think these two questions are all I can think of right now.





“Now, that I have thought about what I already know about the esophagus, and thought about and wrote down questions that I have about the topic, I am now ready to read.



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Procedural
Knowledge

Lesson Plan 3 – Part A: Introduction

	<p>Declarative Knowledge</p> <p>Conditional Knowledge</p>	<p>“I have a reason or a purpose for reading. I will use my questions to focus my attention when reading.</p> <p>“We can use these strategies of thinking about what we already know, or activating background knowledge, and of writing down questions, or setting purposes, before reading any time we read. It helps us focus our attention for reading, helps us prepare for reading, and helps us stay focused while reading. Using this strategy can be very helpful when we are reading for information or reading for academic purposes. This strategy helps us remember information better.”</p>
 <p>©Matt McInnes</p>	<p>Assessment: Self-assessment</p>	<p>Fist to Five Technique</p> <p>Ask learners to indicate their confidence in their abilities to try out this strategy by using the fist to five response system. Ask learners, “How well do you think you can use the setting purposes for reading strategy in a group today?” If learners indicate low confidence, encourage them to ask questions to clarify their understanding. Also, note who feels the least confident, and provide guided instruction to them first during the next step of the lesson.</p>
 <p>©Matt McInnes</p>	<p>Second Whole: Contextualize new strategy into real-life academic task</p>	<p>Inform learners that they will now try making questions or setting purposes for reading for their part of the digestive system.</p>
 <p>©Matt McInnes</p>	<p>Guided Instruction</p>	<p>Review with learners the steps for setting purposes for reading (i.e., “think about what you already know, and think about what you’d like to know”).</p>
 <p>©Matt McInnes</p>	<p>Collaborative Learning</p>	<p>As groups work through this process, sit with each group to provide guidance as necessary (e.g., explaining or modelling</p>

Lesson Plan 3 – Part A: Introduction



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Differentiated

Instruction:

Differentiate

Process by readiness

(e.g., different prompts)

again how to make questions, asking learners to use their own think-aloud to show their understanding, focussing learners' attention on different parts of the task such as starting with background knowledge).

Wrap Up

Inform learners that they will come back to their questions and purposes for reading tomorrow, and that they will apply this strategy to reading articles tomorrow.



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Assessment: Self-assessment

To end the session, ask learners to tell you the steps involved in setting purposes for reading (i.e., think about what you already know, think about what you would like to know, write down questions/purposes). Write these on the board. Have learners copy these down, and rate their confidence in being able to use these steps in a group (i.e., with assistance). Learners comment on if their confidence levels changed from earlier in the lesson (fist to five response system) or if it stayed the same. Prompt learners to think about if and why their confidence changed or not. Learners submit their responses for your review. If learners indicate low confidence consider adapting the next lesson to provide more guided support in this strategy.

Lesson Plan 3 – Part B: Skill/Strategy Development



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First Whole: Set lesson goals

Lesson Objective: By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to read and collaboratively find answers to their pre-reading questions.

Materials:

White board, markers.

Teacher-created articles on parts of the digestive system.

Projector and screen.

Agenda

Read agenda with learners. Clarify steps as necessary so that learners understand the skills that they will focus on today. As the lesson progresses, return to the agenda to check off what was completed and to indicate the next step. A sample agenda is as follows:

1. Review self-assessment.
2. Review background knowledge and purposes for reading.
3. Answer questions while reading.
4. Share learning with peers.



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First Whole: Connect to learners' experiences, activate background knowledge

Warm-up

Review with learners what strategies were practised in the last lesson. Return and have learners review the end-of-the-class self-assessment (i.e., think about what you already know, think about what you would like to know, write down questions/purposes). Elicit from learners why it can be useful to use these strategies (e.g., to help you understand what you are reading, to make



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Review of declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge

Lesson Plan 3 – Part B: Skill/Strategy Development



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Part: Explicit strategy instruction

connections to what you know already and what is in the text, to help focus attention while reading, to help remember the information). Clarify any questions learners may have.

Learners go back into their groups from yesterday and review the ideas that they brainstormed and categorized to activate their background knowledge and the questions that they made about the topic.

Inform learners that, “Today we are going to practise reading while thinking about our questions. We have a purpose for reading now – to find answers to our questions.

“Yesterday I showed you how I made questions about the esophagus based on what I already knew. Then you worked in groups and made your own questions about the part of the digestive system you chose. Today, I will show you how I read something to find the answers to my questions. And later, you will practise this in your groups.



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Strategy: Procedural Knowledge

“So, yesterday, I thought about what I already knew about the esophagus, thought of my questions, and wrote down my questions [write questions on the board]. These are my questions: How does food move through the esophagus? And does the esophagus have liquid in it? Can we think of any other questions to ask? [Learners share any questions that they would like to add about the esophagus. Write them on the board. This may lead to greater engagement in the process.]

Now, I will read my article out loud, and think about if the information in it connects to what I already know and answers my questions.

Lesson Plan 3 – Part B: Skill/Strategy Development



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Focused Instruction: Model/Think-aloud

“I will show you how I do this by doing a think-aloud while I read this article.” Project the article on the board. Read the article out loud to the class and pause at points when information matches what was brainstormed as part of background knowledge in order to emphasize the connections to prior knowledge. For example, “I will stop here because I see that the article tells me that the esophagus is a tube. I am going to put a check mark on my list so I can see what pieces of information that I already knew were in the article.” Continue reading, and if a part of the article answers a question, explain “Oh look! Here is the answer to my first question! Yay! I love it when I learn something new. My first question was ‘How does food move through the esophagus?’ This part of the article tells me that food moves through the esophagus because there are muscles in the esophagus. Oh! I didn’t know that! Muscles squeeze the food down to the stomach. This reminds me of trying to get the last little bit out of a toothpaste tube – I use my finger muscles to squeeze the tube gently to move the bit of toothpaste out. That is kind of like the esophagus squeezing food down the tube. OK. I understand this. I will look at my question now and I will write down my answer beside it: [write under the question on the board] Food is pushed through the esophagus by muscles”. Continue in this fashion being sure to emphasize connections to background knowledge and finding answers to the pre-reading questions.







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Guided Practice

After modelling a few examples of how these connections are made, encourage learners to think about connections they see and to find answers to question

Lesson Plan 3 – Part B: Skill/Strategy Development

		that were posed. Invite them to write down their ideas or connections. This will activate their strategic thinking before moving on to do this in groups.
	Strategy: Procedural Knowledge	At the end of this think-aloud, elicit from learners what was involved in the reading process (i.e., comparing information to background knowledge, finding answers to questions). If learners do not respond, ask questions such as, “What did I do when I was reading? I made a check mark on this paper [prior knowledge list]. Why did I do that? What did I do when I found an answer to one of my questions?”
 ©Matt McInnes	Second Whole: Links together the pieces into a real-life academic task	In groups, learners are provided with a copy of their article. Remind learners that as they read they need to think about two things (i.e., connect to background knowledge and look for answers).
 ©Matt McInnes	Guided Practice and Collaborative Learning	Groups orally read through their articles and find connections to their background knowledge and find answers to their questions.
 ©Matt McInnes	Differentiation of process by readiness	Circulate around the groups to provide guided instruction and extension questions as necessary (e.g., asking questions, reminding learners of the process) Once groups have completed their reading and answered their own questions, have the groups discuss what they did, what they learned, and how they did it. They will then share their ideas with other students.
 ©Matt McInnes	Assessment: Observation	Observation: Presentation of Information With a partner from the group, learners join another set

Lesson Plan 3 – Part B: Skill/Strategy Development

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Assessment: Self-Assessment

of partners from a different group. Learners share the information from their articles and how the information connects to what they already knew and what questions were answered. Circulate to observe discussions and ensure that learners stay on track in this discussion. Learners could submit their question and answer sheets for teacher review at the end of the lesson. These sheets would be assessed as “Achieved with help”.

Think-Pair-Share

After completing this activity, ask learners to think about what they did during this process and how it helped them understand the information better. Questions: What are ‘purposes for reading’? How do we set purposes for reading? Why is it important to set purposes? Learners then share their ideas with a partner. Learners can then share their ideas with the whole class or formulate a written response about using this strategy.

Concluding Thoughts

The purpose of this handbook was to provide ESL adult literacy instructors with the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge for teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners using the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility framework. This handbook was intended to provide clearly segmented and labelled information about the three processes so that readers can easily locate and implement aspects of the approaches without having to sift through pages and chapters and relying on background knowledge to be able to pick out the hidden references within the texts.

I hope that the information and lesson plans provided in this handbook were relevant, practical, and accessible to all instructors. I hope that you can use the ideas and information presented in this handbook to inform your instructional practices. I also hope that the reflection questions provided at the beginning, middle, and end of the chapters were valuable to you in making connections between and integrating into practice what you already knew with what was new about the needs of ESL adult literacy learners, reading, and the instructional processes. You may find that you have already been using some or all of the aspects of one or more of these processes. You may have found that this handbook validates what you have already been doing in your classes. You may have learned something new about reading and the unique needs of ESL adult literacy learners. You may have had your own goals in reading this handbook, and I hope that some of your reading goals were met.

Each of the three instructional processes is complex. You may decide that you want to start using some or all of them in your instructional design. It

is important to remember that you do not need to begin using all the elements at the same time as this would be too overwhelming for both you and your learners. I recommend that you begin implementing aspects that you think are easy to implement or that you think would have the greatest impact for your learners and build in more elements over time.

Thank you for picking up this handbook and reading it. I wish you well in your ongoing professional development.

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Glossary of Terms

actual developmental level The level at which learners are able to complete tasks independently (Vygotsky, 1978), **137**

alphabetic principle The process of using letters in a written alphabet to represent meaningful, spoken words (Kruidenier, 2002), **111**

at-level texts Texts of which learners can read about 90% independently, **181**

balanced literacy approach Instruction that combines both top-down and bottom-up instructional approaches, **123**

bottom-up approaches Explicit, skills-based instruction that moves along a linear and sequential series of reading skills. Instruction may focus first on developing awareness of the sounds of English, then focus on phonics, on words, and finally on sentences (Birch, 2015), **123**

building community The principle of differentiation that represents learning environments designed to meet learners' needs for acceptance, affiliation, contribution, challenge, and support (Tomlinson, 2014), **134**

calibration "The ability to accurately self-assess in order to affect learning decisions" (Fisher & Frey, 2014, p. 101), **181**

choice boards Permanent wall pockets that contain different choices of activities for students, **142**

CLB Canadian Language Benchmarks, **87**

cognitive skill development (literacy as) The idea that literacy development includes learning discrete skills and strategies such as decoding, making predictions about the content of text based on the title or images, scanning a directory to find an office location, **97**

collaborative learning Working with others to apply skills, strategies, and knowledge, and support each other in the process (Fisher & Frey, 2014), **173**

comprehension The purposeful and active cognitive process during which readers read a text to understand what is read, to construct memory representations of what is understood, and to put this understanding to use (NRP, 2000), **102**

conditional knowledge The when and why of applying the procedures to meet the goals of the skill, strategy, or instructional process, **87**

content (differentiating) What instructors want students to know, be able to do, and the texts and examples that make up the module or lesson (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011), **145**

contingency How instructors adapt their teaching to meet the needs of learners, **166**

continual assessment The principle of differentiation that represents on-going

needs assessments and assessment for learning, **134**

declarative knowledge Knowledge about what a skill, strategy, or instructional process is, **87**

demonstration Used to show physical tasks or procedures (e.g., holding a pencil, letter formation), **160**

directionality The pattern of eye movement during a task such as moving eyes from left-to-right or top-to-bottom, **119**

dotmocracy A technique used to determine needs and preferences for upcoming themes and topics. The class brainstorms ideas, learners cast their vote by placing a dot or a sticker beside what is most important for them, the votes are tallied, and the class determines what theme or topic will follow, **140**

environment The setting or feeling of a classroom or school. A positive environment may be invitational, supportive, safe, and may include anti-violence and anti-discrimination policies (Hardiman, 2010), **151**

ESL English as a second language OR English as a subsequent language, **87**

ESL adult literacy learners Individuals who are learning English as a subsequent language and have fewer than 10 years of formal education in their first language which has often been interrupted. These learners are not functionally literate in their first language, **87**

fading The gradual withdrawal of scaffolding based on learners'

responsiveness to supports and their progress, **166**

first whole This step of the interactive instructional approach starts with an authentic task in its entirety and ensures that learners have the background knowledge, vocabulary, and motivation to learn, **124**

flexible management The principle of differentiation that represents grouping learners in a variety of ways, **134**

fluency The ability to read accurately, with speed, and with comprehension in both silent and oral reading (Birch, 2015), **111**

focused instruction The part of the lesson during which the instructor assumes all or most of the responsibility for completing the task by modelling or demonstrating how to do it (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), **160**

functionally literate "The ability to read and write with understanding a short simple statement in everyday life and to make simple arithmetic calculations" (UNESCO, 2014), **99**

gradual release of responsibility A framework in which the cognitive load for learning is intentionally shifted from the instructor to the learner over time (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), **157**

guided instruction The transitional part of the lesson during which instructors provide scaffolded instruction that assists learners in moving from instructor-supported practice to being able to do the task independently (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), **165**

independent learning The part of the lesson during which learners assume all or most of the responsibility for the task completion (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), **181**

interactive instructional approach A balanced literacy model that combines both top-down/meaning-based and bottom-up/skills-based approaches into a specific sequence that moves from an authentic task in its entirety, to focused instruction on the building of skills and strategies, and then returns to a whole authentic task again (e.g., CCLB, 2014; Knowles et al, 2012, **124**

interest A feeling or emotion that causes individuals to focus on or attend to something because it matters to them (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011), **140**

LEA Language experience approach, **112**

learner self-assessment Learners think about what they can do, and how well they can do it (Pettis, 2014), **181**

learner self-assessment Learners think about what they can do, and how well they can do it (Pettis, 2014), **181**

learning profiles How students like to learn and/or how they learn best (Tomlinson, 2014), **142**

learning style theory The idea that individuals learn differently and more effectively when the learning environment most closely matches their preferred approaches to learning, **142**

LINC Language Instruction to Newcomers to Canada. A federally funded language program for newcomers to Canada, **87**

metacognition The processes that learners use to plan, organize, self-instruct, self-monitor, and self-evaluate through the learning process (Zimmerman, 1986), **181**

metalinguistic awareness The trained skill that requires knowledge of specific terms and ways of talking and thinking about language using terminology such as sentence, noun, verb, clause, or preposition (National Institute for Literacy, 2010), **106**

mindset The set of assumptions, expectations, and beliefs that guide our behaviour and interactions with others (Tomlinson, 2014), **133**

modelling An instructional technique in which an expert or skilled other demonstrates to a novice how to use a skill or strategy, often by thinking-aloud the steps and mental processes involved in a process (Grabe & Stoller, 2013; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Regan & Berkeley, 2012; Rupley, Blair, & Nichols, 2009), **160**

non-literate learners Individuals who come from a print-rich and literate society, but did not learn to read or write often due to socioeconomic reasons. They are not functionally literate in their first language, **99**

noticing Teachers' observations of learners' understanding and their planning/adapting of lessons based on learners' needs, **160**

part This step of the interactive instructional approach focuses on explicit instruction and practice of specific skills-based (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics) or meaning-based (i.e., vocabulary, fluency, comprehension) reading

components. This step consists of its own subset of whole-part-whole steps (e.g., modelling, breaking the task down into steps, learners using the new skills in context), **125**

PBLA Portfolio Based Language Assessment (Pettis, 2014), **134**

phonemic awareness The ability to focus on and manipulate phonemes in spoken words, **111**

procedural knowledge Knowledge about how to do a skill, strategy, or instructional process, **87**

process The time in class when learners are trying out the ideas, connecting ideas to what they already know, and applying them to new settings (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011), **147**

product Ways that learners demonstrate what they know, understand, and can do at the end of a module (Tomlinson, 2014), **149**

quality curriculum The principle of differentiation that represents the development and selection of outcomes, lesson objectives, and themes or topics based on learners' needs, abilities, interests, and ways of learning, **134**

readiness A complex set of factors that affect the level of difficulty at which students are ready to learn and the rate at which they grow (Tomlinson, 2014), **137**

reflection Learners think about what learning processes help them learn (Pettis, 2014), **181**

respectful tasks The principle of differentiation that represents the use of classroom tasks that are designed for

learners of different levels of readiness, interest, and learning profile and are equally engaging and appropriate for all learners (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011), **134**

scaffolding The process of providing temporary supports by more experienced to less experienced individuals (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976), **165**

second whole This step of the interactive instructional approach guides learners in contextualizing the parts into meaningful practice and transferring the skills into an authentic real-life task, **127**

self-regulation The metacognitive processes, motivational processes, and behavioural processes that learners engage in to be active participants in their own learning processes (Zimmerman, 1994), **181**

semi-literate learners Individuals who come from a print-rich and literate society, started but did not complete school in their first language, and who are not functionally literate in their first language, **99**

skilled reading Being able to recognize words, attach meaning to those words, comprehend the words as they are strung together in sentences and paragraphs, understand when comprehension is challenged, and know what to do when comprehension is difficult, **102**

social practice The idea that literacy development includes the acquisition of values, attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and social relationships around literacy practices (Purcell-Gates, Jacobson, & Degener, 2004), **97**

sociocultural competence Learners' pragmatic knowledge about how to communicate appropriately within various social and cultural contexts (Celce-Murcia, 2007), **173**

spiral review Return to and build upon skills, strategies, and knowledge developed earlier in the term or the school year, **173**

task prioritization The process of determining which tasks are more difficult and therefore require more time to complete (Fisher & Frey, 2014), **181**

thinking aloud The process of orally describing how one makes decisions, implements skills, activates problem-solving approaches, and evaluates whether success has been achieved, **160**

top-down approaches Holistic, meaning-based interactions with text in which

learners are immersed in authentic, real-life tasks and print experiences (Pressley, 2006), **123**

transfer of responsibility The part of the lesson when learners take increasing control of the completion of the task and of their learning, **166**

visual literacy The ability to comprehend pictures and other visual messages such as film and body language (Arbuckle, 2004), **108**

whole-part-whole approach. *See* **interactive instructional approach**

word analysis Letter-sound correspondence or phonics, **111**

zone of proximal development What learners are able to do with support from a more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978), **137**

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CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this major research project was to develop a handbook that provides instructors with declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge (Paris et al., 1983) associated with the interactive instructional approach (Knowles et al., 2012; Vinogradov, 2010), differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2014), and the gradual release of responsibility framework (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Wood et al., 1976) in the context of teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. As close to 60,000 permanent residents in Canada in 2008 have fewer than 10 years of formal education in their first language (Government of Canada, 2009), ESL adult literacy learners represent a sizable number of individuals who have unique learning needs. ESL adult literacy learners require additional instructional supports in language classes (e.g., Arbuckle, 2004; Castro-Caldas et al., 1998; Cromley, 2005; National Institute for Literacy, 2010; Purcell-Gates et al., 2004; Oxford, 2011; Reis et al., 2006) in comparison to their peers who have completed more than 10 years of education in their first language.

While ESL adult literacy learners' needs are high, relatively few structured supports and resources are available to instructors. Several governmental publications indicate that ESL adult literacy learners require specialized instructors who are knowledgeable in teaching ESL and literacy (CCLB, 2014; CIC, 2012a; Jangles Productions, 2006). Even with the development of the revised *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014), no formal training program currently exists. Without this roll-out program for the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners*, it is possible that only self-directed ESL adult literacy

instructors may elect to access, read, and use the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* at this time. As there has not yet been any training provided with the release of the revised literacy benchmarks (CCLB, 2014), instructors may seek out additional sources to increase their pedagogical knowledge about how to teach ESL adult literacy learners using instructional practices that are represented in the literacy benchmarks document.

In this chapter, I present a summary of this major research project including the need for the handbook, its development, and its evaluation. I discuss the feedback provided from the three reviewers, outline the corresponding revisions, and describe considerations for future editions of the handbook. I identify implications for practice, and make recommendations for practice and future research. I conclude the chapter with final thoughts about this project.

Summary of the Project

This project grew out of my professional and academic interests in looking for ways to meet ESL adult literacy learners' unique reading needs. Equipped with knowledge obtained during my instructional experiences, approximately 10 years of knowledge gained through informal and formal ESL adult literacy professional development, and literature reviewed as part of my Master of Education degree coursework, I critically reviewed the *Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners* (CCLB, 2014) to locate instructional recommendations for teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. Finding references to the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility framework, I then searched for literature on the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge

(Paris et al., 1983) associated with these instructional processes. The literature review was conducted in order to deepen my knowledge about the three instructional processes including how they have been implemented effectively in the classroom and what the associated benefits are for beginning readers. I found that while some research examined the impact of using the interactive instructional with ESL adult literacy learners (e.g., Trupke-Bastidas & Poulos, 2007; Vinogradov, 2010), there was a gap in the literature with respect to how to implement differentiated instruction and the gradual release of responsibility framework with this population. Therefore, I expanded the literature review to include other types of learners including children who are learning to read, ESL learners, and adult first-language literacy learners. Collectively, these literature reviews informed my critical analysis of existing handbooks to determine how they address the three instructional processes and provided me with knowledge that was incorporated into the handbook.

Next, four existing handbooks (i.e., Bell, 2013; BVC, 2009; Croydon, 2005; Massaro, 2004) were reviewed to determine if and how explicitly they addressed the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge associated with the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility framework for teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. The handbooks addressed some of the types of knowledge for some parts of the instructional processes; however, none of the handbooks clearly segmented, labelled, described, or exemplified the what, how, and why for each of the instructional processes. Because this information was typically embedded within these texts and focused primarily on the declarative and procedural aspects of each instructional process, instructors may have difficulty accessing

and implementing these instructional recommendations. Instructors may experience challenges as they may not know what the instructional processes are, how to implement them, and why they are important for teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. One characteristic of effective professional development includes the development of instructors' pedagogical knowledge (Guskey, 2003). As providing literacy learners with the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge around instructional processes has the potential to increase their learning (Almasi & Fullerton, 2012; Blair et al., 2007; Paris et al., 1983), I thus decided that my handbook would emphasize these elements.

I also endeavoured to make the handbook relevant, accessible, practical, and valid (Nardi, 2014) for ESL adult literacy instructors. These four factors have been found to affect instructors' willingness to read texts, integrate the new information into their knowledge base, and apply new ideas to their instructional contexts (Bartels, 2003; Borg, 2010; Nassaji, 2012; Rankin & Becker, 2006). Because an intention of the handbook was to encourage instructors to enhance their understanding of their work and build on their existing knowledge of the what, how, and why of teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners, I included reflection questions throughout the chapters as a scaffolding technique to encourage readers to consider the information and ideas presented in the handbook through the lens of their own cultural and conceptual filters, and teaching and learning experiences (Ellis, 2010; Rankin & Becker, 2006).

This handbook was reviewed by three experts who were purposefully selected because of my professional rapport with them, their extensive experience teaching ESL adult literacy learners, their experience preparing documents for publication, and my perception of them as insightful individuals who could provide relevant feedback. The

reviewers were provided with an electronic copy of the handbook and evaluation form. The evaluation form consisted of a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Undecided, Strongly Disagree) and five open-ended questions. The remainder of this chapter describes feedback that was provided, changes I made in the handbook, implications for practice, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion of the Evaluation and Revision of the Handbook

Three experienced ESL adult literacy instructors evaluated a draft version of this handbook and provided feedback about its relevance, accessibility, practicality (Bartels, 2003; Borg, 2010; Nassaji, 2012; Rossiter et al., 2013), and face validity (Nardi, 2014). All feedback from the reviewers was considered, with many comments and suggestions applied to the final version of the handbook.

Overall Impressions

All of the reviewers indicated a positive perception of the handbook overall. All the reviewers indicated that the handbook was practical, relevant, and of benefit to beginning and experienced ESL adult literacy instructors. As Reviewer 1 explained, the handbook is “supportive of teachers.” Reviewer 1 also described the value of the handbook by stating that she wished she had had this handbook when she started teaching and that she could benefit still from it in her current teaching position:

I wish I had this handbook when I started teaching literacy – and even before that, so I could have better understood my literacy learners in the mainstream LINC classes I taught! It’s a practical and relevant resource I can use right away, and something I would refer to often when teaching literacy learners in any class.

Reviewer 2 indicated that the handbook “will certainly assist many ESL literacy instructors, especially instructors who are new to ESL literacy.” Reviewer 3 stated that the handbook “will be an asset to both experienced practitioners and those who are just starting their professional journeys.” Overall, the reviewers perceived this handbook to be valuable, practical, and relevant.

Comments and Revisions Made Regarding Relevance

The reviewers indicated that the handbook is needed, is grounded in current literature, and is relevant to all levels of literacy instruction. Reviewer 3 contextualized the need for the handbook stating, “It is a much needed resource in Canadian Adult ESL professional context which will equip language instructors regardless of their experience with the transferable strategies, concepts, and ideas in the area of teaching reading to Adult ESL literacy learners.” Two reviewers indicated that the research cited in the handbook is relevant and up-to-date. Reviewer 2 found that, “There is good support for the ideas in the work.” Reviewer 3 mentioned that, “The handbook is well referenced and links to reputable and valuable sources in the field of Adult Literacy.” Regarding the range of literacy learners represented in this handbook (i.e., low level, mid-level, and high-level learners), Reviewer 3 expressed that she valued the range of literacy levels profiled and exemplified in the lesson plans, “I particularly appreciated the inclusion of a lesson plan with a more academic theme.”

While the reviewers expressed that the handbook is needed and is well-grounded in current literature, Reviewer 3 indicated that the introductory chapter in the draft version was too long. She stated that some of the content could be reduced to be more concise implying that it may lack relevancy to front-line instructors. Upon considering

this feedback, I decided to condense several the repetitive subsections (i.e., Purpose of the Handbook, Intentions of the Handbook).

Comments and Revisions Made Regarding Practicality

Overall, all three reviewers perceived the handbook as being a practical resource with many transferable ideas and concepts. Reviewer 2 stated that the ideas are readily applicable to the classroom: “There is good support for the ideas in the work and these ideas can be readily taken by instructors and applied in their classrooms.” Reviewer 3 indicated that the handbook could be applied to other skills and instructional contexts: “The concept and strategies described in the handbook are transferable and can be applied in teaching other skills and learner groups.”

Learning profiles. All of the reviewers strongly agreed on the 5-point Likert scale that the handbook provided relatable examples through the composite learner narratives. One reviewer indicated that, “The composite profiles are an excellent way to make the content practical and inform the reader of the needs of an adult ESL Literacy learner. Examples in the context are brilliant.” No recommendations were made to change the learner profiles or the examples.

Lesson plans. All three reviewers found that the three lesson plans in the handbook provided clear and practical examples of how to implement the instructional processes. One reviewer agreed and two reviewers strongly agreed that all three lesson plans are ready-to-use or adaptable. They also spoke to the usability of the lesson plans as a template or a model. For example, Reviewer 3 stated that

Lesson plans developed in Section 3 are innovative and reflective of the concepts discussed in the handbook as well as the author’s practical experience. They can

be immediately applied by instructors in the appropriate contexts, or used as a reference tool in creating new lesson plans.

Similarly, all the reviewers stated that ESL adult literacy instructors would benefit from the detail provided in the lesson plans. For example, Reviewer 2 stated that the lesson plans helped concretize the teaching process:

The lesson plans in the handbook are extremely detailed, serving as a step-by-step teaching tool for instructors. Beginning ESL literacy instructors would learn a lot from reading these lesson plans, answering the question of what an ESL literacy class actually LOOKS like.

In addition, Reviewer 1 stated that, “The lesson plans are excellent: thorough, well organized.”

In terms of suggestions, Reviewer 3 recommended that a “fillable lesson plan template” could be provided. For technical reasons, I have elected not to include this in the current version of the handbook, but will consider adding it in a future edition. Also, the lesson plans do not follow a consistent instructional sequence, in that the order of the elements of the three instructional processes overlap and can occur at various parts of the lesson.

Glossary. The reviewers varied in their perceptions about the usefulness of the glossary contained in the draft version of the Handbook. With the evaluation form statement, “The Glossary of Terms is useful,” Reviewer 1 strongly agreed, Reviewer 2 agreed, and Reviewer 3 was undecided. Reviewer 3 stated that the glossary was underutilized. She recommended that it be expanded, so that instructors could more easily locate a wider range of terms. This particular reviewer highlighted several words and

phrases within the handbook that she perceived as important. I agreed with this recommendation and expanded the glossary to include more than eightfold the terms listed in the original draft version.

Appendices. Another suggestion to improve the practicality of the handbook was to develop an appendix that provided an overview of all of the instructional strategies and techniques within the handbook. An appendix such as this has the potential to benefit readers in that they would be able to refer to this appendix as a quick reference when planning to implement one or more of the strategies. I decided to adjust this recommendation slightly and included an index of the strategies and techniques described in the handbook. It is hoped that the addition of this index would enhance the practicality of the handbook by providing instructors with a quick reference table that would allow them to easily locate specific strategies and techniques. I may consider including an extended appendix in a future edition.

Comments and Revisions Made Regarding Accessibility

Overall, the majority of the feedback provided included suggestions about how to make the handbook more accessible in two main areas: voice and formatting. Reviewer 2 indicated that the voice changed across chapter 2 (Reading and the Unique Needs of ESL Adult Literacy Learners) in comparison to the remainder of the handbook. This reviewer found that the voice in this chapter was more academic and characteristic of a literature review. She found that the voice in the other chapters was more consistent and personable. I decided to revise the draft version of chapter 2 and incorporate it into chapter 1. The content was shortened significantly and I included practical examples. As teachers prefer to read texts that are accessible with respect to writing style and that

connect with their teaching experiences and instructional context (Bartels, 2003; Nassaji, 2012; Rossiter et al., 2013), I hope that this edit improved the quality of the handbook overall, and made the content more accessible.

Regarding the formatting suggestions, Reviewer 3 emphasized the need to have pop-outs or text boxes on every page. She indicated that people rarely read a handbook from beginning to end, and instead tend to flip through to locate relevant information. To make this handbook more accessible, she recommended that several important phrases or key points be highlighted, bolded, or placed in text boxes. For example, Reviewer 3 stated that

[highlighting or inserting pop-outs to emphasize certain ideas and statements] will make it even more appealing and useful to the reader. Teachers/instructors [are] most likely to be short of time for an in-depth read, so it is important to create a handbook that is useful even if the reader just opens it in a random place and reads the highlight or the pop-out.

Reviewer 3 diligently highlighted several sentences and concepts that she believed should be emphasized. I reviewed her suggestions, and I placed several of the highlighted terms in text boxes in an attempt to draw attention to key points.

Reflection questions. The reflection questions were intended to support readers in integrating new concepts into their existing knowledge by connecting their practice to theory (Rankin & Becker, 2006). However, the reflection questions in the draft version did not always support this intention. One reviewer recommended that the reflection questions included in the draft version be reconsidered because some questions seemed to test the knowledge of the reader rather than encourage readers to make their own

connections. In the follow-up telephone conversation, Reviewer 3 recommended that reflection questions connect only with instructional experiences rather than focusing on knowledge as some readers could feel alienated or put off by questions of that nature. I considered this suggestion, and adapted the reflection questions throughout the handbook to represent the original purpose.

Another suggestion from about the accessibility of the reflection questions was to provide a space to record the responses in a digital format or to include a graphic organizer for writing reflections. Reviewer 3 contextualized here recommendation by explaining that while she wanted to answer the reflection questions while reading, she did not have a pen and paper with her, so only briefly considered her responses before continuing to read.

This [the reflection questions] is an excellent way to engage the reader in reflective interaction with the content. However, since there isn't a dedicated space for this in the handbook itself, it is very likely that the reader may overlook or not perform the suggested activities. Develop a mechanism for the reader to record their questions and review them as they interact with the content.

As part of my follow-up conversations with each of the reviewers, I asked about their interaction with and opinion of the value of these reflection questions. Each reviewer indicated that she did not actually do the reflection questions, but thought they were valuable to get readers thinking about and engaged with the content. One reviewer indicated that if the handbook were to be used as part of a teacher-training course, the reflection questions would be an important tool for teachers-in-training. I will consider

how to add in a text box in which readers can type their reflection responses in a digital format for a future edition.

Lesson plans. While the reviewers found the detail in the lesson plans to be informative the important, they differed in their opinions about the extent to which lesson plans could be digested. Reviewers recommended that I label the parts of the lesson plan with letters or numbers, so I entitled the parts with letters such as *Lesson Plan 1: Part A*. Their recommendations for improvement included providing a lesson overview before each lesson so that all the parts could be understood in a snapshot. For example, Reviewer 3 stated, “The lesson plans are meticulous. A complementary shorter version would be an asset.” Reviewer 2 explained,

The lesson plans are extremely detailed – which is a real strength, especially for beginning instructors – but I would have found it helpful to have a shorter summary (one page?) to be able to see the whole plan at a glance before going into detail (this is perhaps my own reliance on whole-part-whole!).

With these recommendations, I created a table that represents what instructional processes are incorporated into which part of the lessons.

All reviewers agreed or strongly agreed in the 5-point Likert scale that the icons and colour-coding in the Lesson Plan Glossary made it easy to identify the instructional processes within the lesson plans. Reviewer 1 indicated that “The use of colour and images is great.”

Practical examples. Throughout the handbook, I included several practical examples in an attempt to make the content more accessible. One reviewer indicated that

practical examples made the handbook accessible in that the concepts were easier to grasp with the information included. Reviewer 3 stated that,

It is an insightful read with a multitude of practical examples from a multi-level and mixed-ability literacy classroom, and multiple opportunities to connect the information to individual experiences. Personalized examples described in the handbook are an excellent way to facilitate a better grasp of some of the complex ideas and concepts.

Comments and Revisions Made Regarding Face Validity

All the reviewers strongly agreed on the 5-point Liker scale that the purpose of the handbook was clearly stated and understandable. One reviewer agreed and two strongly agreed that the handbook achieved its objective. This feedback indicates that the handbook has face validity in that it was “doing what it’s supposed to be doing” (Nardi, 2014).

Implications for Theory

The available literature regarding the three instructional processes (i.e., the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, the gradual release of responsibility framework) informed the content of the handbook. The instructional processes described in the handbook provide an in-depth look at the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge (Paris et al., 1983) for the three instructional processes as they relate to teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. At the time of writing this major research project, there did not seem to be any readily available resources for ESL adult literacy instructors that clearly segmented, labeled, and explained the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge associated with the three

instructional processes. This handbook demonstrates how the three instructional processes can be brought together into cohesive lesson plans and how they intersect. Thus, the handbook provides a model for ESL adult literacy instructors in connecting the theoretical concepts associated with each of the instructional processes into practice through the lesson plans instructors can refer to this handbook when planning lessons and when contingently adapting lessons to meet the needs of learners while teaching.

While literature exploring the decision-making processes of ESL instructors during reading lessons is limited, some instructional patterns have been noted between instructors who teach reading to English and ESL students (Borg, 2015). For instance, beginning and experienced teachers tend to make different kinds of decisions before and during reading instruction. Beginning teachers tend to focus more of their energy on devising meticulous and formal lesson plans, and less of their energy on making improvisational changes during the lesson (Borg, 2015; Hall & Smith, 2006). On the other hand, experienced teachers tend to adapt their lesson plans contingently based on specific instructional contexts and the needs of their learners (Borg, 2015; Gün, 2014). Thus, beginning ESL adult literacy instructors may refer to this handbook during the planning phase of their lessons to make evidence-informed decisions about what instructional processes to use, how to use them, and why they are beneficial to ESL adult literacy learners. The sample lesson plans also provide a model that integrates the three instructional processes for these instructors who characteristically utilize such detailed lesson plans (Hall & Smith, 2006).

Similarly, experienced ESL adult literacy instructors may find some of the content of this handbook to be novel and may benefit from the declarative, procedural, and

conditional knowledge associated with each of the three instructional processes to inform their lessons (Hall & Smith, 2006). Experienced teachers tend to adapt their lesson plans contingently based on specific instructional contexts, the needs of their learners, and their prior experiences. Thus, reference to this handbook can validate experienced instructors' in-class decision-making by providing theoretical connections to their current practices as well as introduce them to new ideas to which they can relate their prior experiences (Bartels, 2003; Borg, 2010). Consequently, this handbook may facilitate the integration of evidence-informed lesson planning and lesson improvisations using the interactive instructional approach, the gradual release of responsibility framework, and differentiated instruction for both beginning and experienced instructors.

This handbook was specifically designed for ESL instructors based on theoretical findings about how teachers prefer to be informed by research. As several researchers (Borg, 2010; Nassaji, 2012; Rossiter et al., 2013) state, ESL instructors prefer to read texts that are practical, relevant, and accessible. The handbook was designed with the intention of providing ESL adult literacy instructors with relevant information about important instructional processes, while providing them with practical examples and tools within an easy-to-read and easy-to-navigate layout. The feedback on the evaluation form and the follow-up phone conversation with the three reviewers provided additional insights into how to improve these design elements. This handbook was revised to reflect the input of experienced adult literacy educators, and therefore, provides balance across its theoretical framework and practical application exemplars. As such, this handbook provides rationales as well as exemplifies the target design considerations in the context of teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

The purpose of this handbook was to provide instructors with the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge (e.g., Paris et al., 1983) associated with three instructional processes (i.e., interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, the gradual release of responsibility framework) for teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. In an effort to increase engagement with this handbook, I endeavoured to make this handbook relevant, practical, accessible, and valid (Borg, 2010; Nardi, 2014; Nassaji, 2012; Rossiter et al., 2013) so that instructors can use it as a tool to inform their practice. This handbook is unique in the sense that it segments, labels, and exemplifies the declarative, procedural, and conditional elements for each of the three instructional processes. When seeking out pedagogical knowledge about how to teach reading to ESL adult literacy learners, instructors may benefit from the handbook as they can readily and easily locate information without requiring extensive background knowledge about the topic.

While it is hoped that the handbook will provide new information and ideas on using the instructional approaches, it is not intended to be a prescriptive text. Rather, it is hoped that instructors approach the handbook as self-directed learners (Knowles et al., 2012), find ideas and approaches that connect with their prior knowledge and experiences, and build on and validate their teaching experiences and knowledge (Bartels, 2003; Borg, 2010). This handbook has the potential to support ESL adult literacy instructors with the development, expansion, refinement, and application of their knowledge and skills (Elman et al., 2005).

Beyond ESL adult literacy instructors seeking out and using the handbook in self-directed ways, the handbook could be used in different professional development

settings. As physical accessibility is a key factor that influences instructors' engagement with research (Borg, 2010), this handbook could be made available online to instructors through such online network for ESL professionals such as www.tutela.ca. This website is an online repository for ESL professionals across Canada that allows them to post texts, lesson ideas, and join discussion forums that may inform their instructional practices. Online networks have the potential to create professional communities of practice that are flexible and enrich teaching practices (Riverin & Stacey, 2008). Online networks often are accessed by instructors who are seeking independent professional learning opportunities. Independent teacher learning has been defined as, "learning activities that teachers engage in on their initiative and accord, and which possess no connection to their organization" (Jones & Dexter, 2014, p. 371). These self-directed instructors who voluntarily join the forum may also benefit from the potential anonymity of an online environment. When creating online accounts, individuals are able to self-select usernames and this may encourage individuals to participate and seek support without feeling intimidated as they might in a workplace forum (Jones & Dexter, 2014).

To engage ESL instructors in reflecting on how the information and ideas presented in the handbook connect to classroom practices, the handbook could be included in a reading list as part of a study circle. Study circles often are used to provide opportunities for instructors to read relevant literature, discuss the relevance of research in their classroom contexts, discuss strategies for applying the information to their classes, and/or make plans for trying new ideas or changing their practice (National Centre for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, 2006). Study circles can provide instructors with the opportunity to collaboratively build their knowledge, network, share resources,

thoughtfully “unpack” ideas presented in the literature, have the opportunity to observe colleagues’ teaching, and reflect on own practices (Vinogradov, 2013). In addition, the handbook could be added to the reading list of a formal professional development course such as teachers of ESL (TESL) accreditation programs or post-TESL certificate training programs on teaching literacy learners or teaching reading.

Recommendations for Research

Research on ESL adult literacy learning and instruction is a limited but growing field of study (National Institute for Literacy, 2010; Tarone & Bigelow, 2012). Some research has focused on the use of the interactive instructional approach with ESL adult literacy learners (e.g., Trupke-Bastidas & Poulos, 2007; Vinogradov, 2010), but there is a gap in the literature on the use of differentiated instruction and the gradual release of responsibility framework with this population. Because of these gaps in the literature, research could be conducted to examine the prevalence, impact, and experiences of using these approaches during reading instruction with ESL adult literacy learners. For example, surveys could be conducted to examine how often ESL instructors use these instructional practices as well as the types of institutional supports available to support their use. Follow-up interviews could investigate instructors’ knowledge of, experience with, and perceptions of the benefits and challenges of implementing these instructional approaches. In addition, researchers could conduct quasi-experimental studies to measure if reading performance and learner rate of progress differ between classes that use one or more of these instructional approaches in comparison to classes that do not. These quasi-experimental studies could be extended by conducting mixed-methods research where researchers could interview instructors and learners to seek insights about their

experiences with these instructional processes with respect to reading progress, perceptions of the self as a reader, and/or reading self-efficacy. Furthermore, qualitative methods including case study (Yin, 2009) could be used to gain insights into the processes of implementing one or more of the three instructional processes. Finally, instructors could reflect on whether the information presented in this handbook affects their lesson planning and students' experiences.

While the handbook focuses on reading skill and strategy instruction, reading is not the only literacy skill that ESL adult literacy learners need to develop. The term literacy also refers to the cognitive skills of writing and numeracy (UNESCO, 2014) and has been used to describe other skills or competencies such as financial literacy, digital literacy, visual literacy, health literacy, science literacy, and critical literacy (Street, 2006). Future studies could examine the prevalence of research on these conceptualizations of literacy in the context of ESL adult literacy learning. The need for instructors' handbooks that address the implementation of the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility framework with these other literacy facets could be examined through the completion of province or nation-wide surveys and/or interviews. In addition, research could be conducted that examines the prevalence of the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge associated with other instructional processes in meeting the diverse needs of ESL adult literacy learners.

Directly relevant to this handbook, future research could be conducted to determine the relevance, practicality, accessibility, and validity (Nardi, 2014) of this handbook with a wider population of ESL instructors. In this study, I consulted three

experienced ESL adult literacy instructors, but not new instructors or instructors with little ESL adult literacy experience. As individuals integrate new knowledge into their personal frameworks based on cultural and conceptual filters (Rankin & Becker, 2006), readers with differing instructional experiences bring different lenses to the text. Readers with varying levels of teaching experience may have different knowledge requirements or prefer or require different descriptions or examples that connect more closely to their prior knowledge and experiences, and validate their own instructional experiences (Bartels, 2003, Borg, 2010). To collect this feedback, researchers could use or adapt the evaluation form (Appendix A) and seek feedback through a survey from ESL teachers in training or recent graduates. Researchers also could seek out feedback about the handbook from instructors who fall into other specific demographics (e.g., years of ESL literacy instructional experience, years of ESL instructional experiences) provincially or nationally.

Final Word

ESL adult literacy learners represent a sizable number of newcomers to Canada (Government of Canada, 2009) and have many unique learning needs (e.g., Arbuckle, 2004; Castro-Caldas et al., 1998; National Institute for Literacy, 2010; Oxford, 2011). Instructors require specialized training to develop an in-depth knowledge about these needs and how to design lessons and programs that appropriately accommodate ESL adult literacy learners (CCLB, 2014; CIC, 2012a; Jangles Productions, 2006). Focusing on the development of literacy skills alongside language skills has the potential to support learners in developing multiple literacy skills and abilities. ESL adult literacy learners value and have articulated several reasons for developing literacy skills as they integrate

into Canadian society. Many ESL adult literacy learners associate high literacy skills with being independent, being able to economically support themselves and their families, being able to help their children with homework, being able to navigate the health care system, and for applying for Canadian citizenship (Perry & Homan, 2014; Pothier, 2010). Others value literacy skills for reading religious texts, learning about their heritage, and/or reading for entertainment (Perry & Homan, 2014).

Returning to UNESCO's (2005) definition of literacy as a continuum of learning that includes "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts" (p. 21), as individuals develop skills across the literacy continuum, they move towards being better equipped to achieve their dreams and goals, increase their knowledge and potential, and participate fully in their communities and wider society. The handbook developed during this major research project is intended to explain and exemplify the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge associated with the interactive instructional approach, differentiated instruction, and the gradual release of responsibility framework to instructors when teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. Instructors can use this content to make informed decisions about what instructional approaches to use when responding to learners' specific needs. Reference to this handbook when designing reading instruction for these learners has the potential to support evidence-informed lesson planning. Evidence-informed lessons can support ESL adult literacy learners in moving through literacy and learning continua, towards achieving their goals, and using literacy to contribute in their communities and society in multiple and meaningful ways.

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Appendix A

Evaluation Form

The What, How, and Why of Teaching Reading to ESL Adult Literacy Learners

Please type your responses below.

1. What was your overall impression of the handbook?

2. What are the strengths of this handbook?

3. Are there any shortcomings? If so, explain what they are and how they might be addressed.

4. Please use a checkmark in the appropriate column.

SA=Strongly Agree **A**=Agree **U**=Undecided **D**=Disagree **SD**=Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	U	D	SD
The purpose of the handbook is clearly stated and understandable.					
The handbook completes what it is intended to.					
The handbook is easy to read.					
The handbook is well organized.					
The terms used in the handbook are clearly defined or explained.					
The Glossary of Terms is useful.					
Each section of the handbook can be used independently or as a stand-alone unit.					
The handbook provides relatable examples through the composite ESL adult literacy learners (i.e., Mu, Andres, Adama).					
The handbook provides a clear description of:					
a. Literacy.					

	SA	A	U	D	SD
b. Reading and the unique needs of ESL adult literacy learners.					
The handbook provides a clear description of the ‘what’/declarative knowledge (what it is) for:					
a. The interactive instructional (whole-part-whole) approach.					
b. Differentiated instruction.					
c. The gradual release of responsibility framework.					
The handbook provides a clear description of the ‘how’/procedural knowledge (how to implement) for:					
a. The interactive instructional (whole-part-whole) approach.					
b. Differentiated instruction.					
c. The gradual release of responsibility framework.					
The handbook provides a clear description of the ‘why’/conditional knowledge (why it is important) for:					
a. The interactive instructional (whole-part-whole) approach.					
b. Differentiated instruction.					
c. The gradual release of responsibility framework.					
The icons and colour coding in the Lesson Plan Glossary make it easy to identify the instructional processes within the lesson plans.					
Lesson Plan 1:					
a. Is easy to understand.					
b. Is ready-to-use and/or adaptable.					
c. Clearly exemplifies the interactive instructional approach (whole-part-whole).					
d. Clearly exemplifies differentiated instruction.					
e. Clearly exemplifies the gradual release of responsibility framework.					
Lesson Plan 2:					
a. Is easy to understand.					
b. Is ready-to-use and/or adaptable.					
c. Clearly exemplifies the interactive instructional approach (whole-part-whole).					

	SA	A	U	D	SD
d. Clearly exemplifies differentiated instruction.					
e. Clearly exemplifies the gradual release of responsibility framework.					
Lesson Plan 3:					
a. Is easy to understand.					
b. Is ready-to-use and/or adaptable.					
c. Clearly exemplifies the interactive instructional approach (whole-part-whole).					
d. Clearly exemplifies differentiated instruction.					
e. Clearly exemplifies the gradual release of responsibility framework.					

5. Is there anything else that you would like to include in your evaluation of this handbook?

Thank you for your time in reading the handbook and completing this evaluation form. Your responses will be used to improve the handbook for other ESL adult literacy instructors.

Appendix B

Use of Images

Icons within the handbook and in the lesson plans were designed by Matt McInnes and used with his permission.

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